"ONE NIGHT!"

WHICH WAS BEGUN

"ONE DAY,"

AND IS NOW

BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION WITHOUT BEING FINISHED;

Yet containing

SOME THINGS WORTH BEGINNING, WHICH, LIKE ETERNITY, WILL HAVE NO END.

Amongst others, the singular Opinions of the

AUTHOR HIMSELF;

And last, not least,

A practical *Illustration* of the

ART OF PROCRASTINATION.

Reader. Oh, DAY and NIGHT, but this is wond'rous strange!
Author. And, therefore, as a stranger give it welcome.

Shakespeare's Hamlet.

London:

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538

PREFACE.

"BREVITY," says my favourite Shakspeare, "is the soul of wit." I think so; and as the soul never has a visible existence, and I mean this preface to be witty, I shall write none at all. My book does not need one in fact; for I have nothing to ask, nothing to extenuate, nothing to wish, and nothing to hope. Read me and judge me: say what you please, I'll be contented: do what you please, "your dishonor shall be humour;" and the very demon of

spleen must surely possess you, if you do not display good humour. *Apropos* of good humour: I remember *one night*—

Pish! I am afraid I shall never forget "ONE NIGHT."

ONE NIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

It was on Wednesday the 1st of April, 1812, about half past two o'clock, P.M. the sun then shining into my room with all the smiling gentleness of reviving spring, that *I thought to myself*, having just closed the second volume of "Thinks I to myself"—something might be done between ourselves (*i. e.* the author and his bookseller) which would answer the mercantile purposes of modern literature. When *Cœlebs* rose like the meteor of schism upon the religious world, *Nu-*

bilia moved along its moral hemisphere, if not with equal rapidity, perhaps with equal lustre, and at once its cor-rival and co-equal, if the infallible dicta of periodical criticism may be confided in; and now, when "Think's I to myself" is entering upon its seventh period of renovation within the ninth month of its birth, *I thought to myself*, surely that which was done by the author of Nubilia may be done by me.

Methinks I hear some cautious inquirer into human motives smiling with pompous scepticism as he reads this paragraph, supposing any such sagacious inquirer would condescend to read any thing so trivial. Admit it, however, that he *has* read it, and think, (for the thought is easy) that he bursts forth with a loud laugh of contemptuous bitterness, in which is

mingled the deriding exclamation of *ideot!*—Ideot! I echo back in imagination; profound scrutinizer of man, acute investigator of life, from what rapid combination of ideas was that portentous word struck off, like a scintillation from the electric mass? He contracts his brow; his lips assume a Sardonic grin; he puts himself in the attitude of overwhelming attack, and, while the consciousness of his condescension beams with a sort of benignant haughtiness from his eyes, he answers—"Yes, ideot! for he *is* an ideot who hopes to deceive mankind without talents that can insure success, or an object that can make deception venial. Sir, what am I to infer from your introductory paragraph? Not certainly what you wish to insinuate: not that you have taken up the pen to enlarge the boundaries of human knowledge; not that you

mean to add one more useful or entertaining book to the list with which the daily papers already groan; not that you intend or have power to equal the author of *Nubilia*, (and I too speak of that work *only* in reference to what the periodical critics have said of it, (but that you are seeking to catch the public attention by presenting yourself to it in the train of a superior being, as the page of a king walks in the public eye because he is behind his master. And what is your motive? Shall I tell you? I will; for I know it, which perhaps you do not, so difficult is it sometimes to know our own intentions. Your motive is gain; filthy lucre; paltry Bank of England notes; miserable paper currency; that depreciated and worthless thing, and which you are content to receive as the reward of your labour. This is your real motive, and

you hope to realize your expectations by sending forth a work, as the counterpart, or imitator, or opposer, of a book which has been received with extraordinary success, but not with a success beyond its merits—"

Author. "Permit me, Sir: are you the author of it? that look tells me you are not. I only suspected you because you praise it so highly; and that, now-a-days, is one of the most certain signs by which to detect the writer of an anonymous publication."

"I wish, Sir—but why should I enter into a dialogue upon a subject foreign to my purpose? I have done all I wished to do: I have torn off the flimsy veil with which you sought to envelope the real motives of your conduct: I have told you a truth—perhaps an unwelcome one—which it was

important you should know. And now, Sir, whether I read your book or not, will depend upon the degree of ability with which I may find it written. I am not so fastidious that I would throw away a treasure because the hand that offers it to me is not so clean as it appears to be; and I am too fastidious to let disguise triumph without exposure."

I thought to myself, as I meditated on this imaginary dialogue, that I was very hardly treated by the suspicions of my sagacious inquirer; and I seriously set about to examine whether they were not frivolous and unfounded. When I had reflected a while, I arrived at the discovery of a most important truth: important to every man in the world, and particularly to every woman: I discovered that no one had been my enemy but myself; and I

then *thought to myself*, alas! this is not the first time—will it be the last time? —that I have been mine own enemy. What business had I, what business has any one, to unfold those secret influences to the world, which the world will only scoff at? Detect them if they be illaudable, and, in the privacy of thine own thoughts, banish them from thy mind altogether; or, if that be impossible, so regulate them that they may lead to no ulterior purposes or acts of criminality; but do not exhibit them to society whose ardent and mocking gaze will only excite you to the proud error of disdaining to be hunted from your opinions.

And now, after all, I am resolved to leave the reader in as much doubt respecting *my motives* in the present undertaking, as if I had never agitated

the question; and in doing which, I pay an implicit deference to the received usages of society; for every one is so much better able to assign the real cause of a man's conduct, than the man himself is, that it is quite ridiculous to suppose he should be the best judge. Whence all our scandal, our defamation, our libels, our slanders, our backbitings, our discords? Because we are never permitted to know our own motives. Why is a minister accused by an enlightened member of the opposition? Because it is utterly impossible he should know his own motives: they who arraign him must, of course, know them much better. Why is a king told that he is aiming at an unconstitutional exercise of power for the worst of purposes, when he conscientiously thinks that he is using his legitimate authority, and feels, at all

events, that he has no sinister ends in view? Because, though a king, he is still a man, and no man is permitted to know his own motives. Why is the conqueror who strikes off a nation's fetters at a blow, and calls high Heaven to witness the purity of his aims, told that he seeks only the bloody wreath of warlike glory, or the tarnished and polluted renown of a military demagogue, who bids high for popularity, and wears his popularity as a cloak to hide the most atrocious intentions? Because it is allowed to no human being to know his own motives. Well then: after kings, warriors, and ministers,—I will not swell the catalogue by descending into the familiar walks of life—comes myself—a poor, unknown, and disregarded being, who surrenders those rights of self-knowledge which the

liberal policy of society demands, and patiently permits every man in the united kingdom to assign a motive for this, his present labour, except himself.

CHAPTER II.

"The manner in which Lucian begins his real history," says Father Daniel, in his admirable satiric romance *Voyage du Monde de Descartes*, "is the most convenient in the world. He tells the reader, at the very first, that all which he is going to say is false; after which, yielding himself entirely to his imagination, he throws forth at random every whimsey which it suggests." I approve highly of this plan; and as I approved of it, *I thought to myself* it would be well to follow it: therefore, reader, prepare yourself for one of the most ingenious mixtures of truth and falsehood you have ever yet encountered since the days of

Lucian: I will compound them so admirably, that had you the talisman of truth in your possession, you should not always succeed in separating its pure ore from the dross of fiction. When you smile with contempt at what may appear exaggeration, you will be violating the majesty of truth, perhaps; and when you read with the placid feeling of conviction, you may be probably imbibing nothing but error.

I was born of a woman as all men are, and my father was a trunk-maker, at least, I always thought so. I came into the world, therefore, in the midst of noise, for I first began to squall at a quarter past eleven, on the 7th of June, 17 and—how many? —Consult the parish register.

The noise that accompanied my

ingress into this sinful state, where I have continued to live with about as much sin as those who deny that they ever sinned at all—was typical of my future destiny, and shadowed out, in a sort of prophetic allegory, the noise that I was to make in my progress through the world. Whether I shall make any noise going out of the world rests with the great Disposer of all things, and I have no curiosity, at present, to disturb its repose by any practical solution of the mystery.

I was not, like my great predecessor, the happy tenant of a HALL, at my birth:* but I arrived at that dignity before I reached manhood, for I was admitted to the honour of sharing the

* See Thinks I to Myself, p. 3. "We lived you must know in a HALL, &c."

official duties of a PORTER'S HALL in the family of Sir Peter Pix. Sir Peter had been a sugar-baker and enjoyed in his old age the *sweets* of his industry. To crown his happiness he had buried his wife. She died the same year that he left off business, by which prudent arrangement he escaped from two toils at once. Few men meet with such double portions of earthly bliss, but Sir Peter was a good man, and goodness rarely goes unrewarded in some way or other. He had so little hypocrisy in his nature that he never shed one tear, nor even *affected to shed a tear*, no, nor held his cambric handkerchief to his eyes, to hide the "*unfruitful* river," when his lady gave up the ghost, or when the undertaker gave her up to the grave. This is as I have heard; for I knew nothing of it at the time, because it was impossible I should, not

being born when lady Pix died; but I have often *thought to myself*, Sir Peter was a man "above the vulgar rules of art," and more qualified to set examples than to follow them. That, however, is matter of opinion; and as I never had the misfortune to be married, or the happiness to lose a wife, I am not perhaps the fittest person to talk about such joys as those I have touched upon above. Sir Peter always kept the anniversary of her burial, with as much festivity as some men do the anniversary of their wedding days; and on those occasions he invited none but smiling widowers, superannuated maidens, and worn-out old bachelors. You would have been astonished had you heard how they chuckled over the glorious privileges of matrimonial freedom, the *pulsare terram pede libero*, and how they execrated and abused that chain, (the

irrupta copula of the poet), which wed*lock* fastens upon us like a pad*lock* and which *locks* two bodies together whose souls have been un*locked* by that key which no *lock* can resist. Toothless maids, drivelling debauchees, and emancipated husbands, used to assemble on that day at the table of Sir Peter, and oh! what discourses have I not heard: what jests, what sarcasms, what inuendoes! had Hymen listened to them, he would have extinguished his torch in despair and vexation. I listened to them, and it extinguished all my love of legitimate procreation. I was never married, and I never mean to be. Some knowledge it is better to derive from the experience of others than from our own: and I take it that the knowledge of the conjugal state is of that sort. It is like whipping, which every man can feel as well from sympathy as from actual practice.

[I wish I knew any man wh... about to write a book upon moral ...ence, I think be might make as much use of this fact, to illustrate the association of ideas, as Descartes did of the blind man's stick, to shew that the soul is not extended through every part of the body.]

Sir Peter Pix—I hope no catholic will read me, for if he or she does—he or she will suspect me—nay, will accuse me of an impiety which I solemnly protest I am innocent of—so please the pigs* I will go on. Sir

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* The common reader—and I am not sure I shall have any but common readers—may not know perhaps the once dignified and sacred character of this now degraded and vulgar phrase. "*Please the pigs*, I'll have a drop," says the washerwoman, as she listens to the glowing praises of a neighbouring gin shop's pure Genevan stream, uttered by some sister of the sacred

Pix lived in a mansion which denominated Candy House, for

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fraternity: and "please the pigs, I'll give it him when he comes home," says the meek, forbearing wife, who is waiting dinner for her husband, while the mutton cools upon the table, or fries to perfect aridity before the fire: but neither of them, nor many others who use the words, know that they are adjuring by a sacred symbol of catholicism. I have no doubt, and I am supported by many learned philologists whom I do not choose to name—(I hate pedantry!) that *pigs* is a corruption of *pyx*, the little box in which the consecrated host is kept: and when we say *please the pigs*, we corrupt the original expression of *please the pyx*, in which expression, by an allowable metonymy, the container is used for the contained, and the actual declaration is meant to be please God: so much for the pigs: and I think I have displayed a very commendable portion of learning for a novel writer: to be sure, Fielding, and Smollet, and Goldsmith had a little learning too, but then—what then? Don't you see I'm at the bottom of the page: how can I go on.

he was too proud to be ashamed of his origin, as may be seen by looking into his armorial bearings, where you will find that his supporters are two sugar loaves: and he lived with a degree of splendour which only a large fortune could support. He had no one to think of but himself; and I will do him the justice to say, that no man thought of himself more than Sir Peter did. In this I suppose he could not be wrong, for our great moral poet has told us that

"*Self-love* and *social* are the same."

I remember—but now I talk of remembering, I have just *thought to myself* that I never told the reader how I came to be one of Sir Peter's inmates—that's a more polite and delicate phrase than *servant*—or at what age it happened, or how I was educated, or what I learned, or where I

went to school, or when my parents died, or—or—or any of those ordinary matters of fact which ought to enter into the composition of every true narrative. This is really a very grave omission—nothing could save me from the severest reprehension but the circumstance of my being the first to find it out, and my readiness to acknowledge its heinousness.

> He who by repentance is not satisfied
> Is not of heaven nor earth.

And as to any person connected with the other division of the creation —I mean hell—let not polite ears be shocked at such an unfashionable name—nor sceptical ones offended at the mention of such a nonentity— I own myself extremely indifferent about their opinion, for I have as much christianity in my nature as makes me

fear such a region, and shun those who seem travelling to its gates.

> Facilis descensus Averno
> Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis
> Sed———

Every schoolboy knows the rest.

There was a very natural concatenation of causes which led to my introduction into the family of Sir Peter Pix, but I do not propose saying a word about any of them in this chapter; therefore he whose curiosity is greater than his patience must proceed, by one leap, to Chapter III., leaving me to finish Chapter II. in any way that my capricious fancy or my tired imagination may suggest. I do not like to conclude it, indeed, with unseemly abruptness, as if I were fairly driven to my shifts, and glad to gain the little blank space which is obtained

by the conclusion of one chapter and the commencement of another; and yet, as I have vowed to go on with the main course of my narration, I have no alternative, I think, but so to do, or to introduce my readers to something in the way of episode, which may serve at once to amuse them, and to vindicate my character.

An episode! that word smells too much of the lamp, and in the mind of a learned reader it may be apt to excite certain ideas connected with Homer, and Virgil, and Milton, and *other writers of that description*, with whom, as I do not mean to compare myself, and if I do not, I am sure nobody else will, it may be as well not to enter into any competition. Fielding even failed in his episode of the *Man of the Hill*, and if he missed success, can it be expected that I, the son of a trunk-

maker, should find it? No, no; modesty has long been the attributed attribute of genius: and if the reader chooses to reason from effects to causes, he may suppose that I have genius, for instead of an episode I shall give him an epigram.

THE LITERARY BREAKFAST.

As lately a sage on dried hog was repasting,
(Though for breakfast too savoury I ween)
He exclaim'd to a friend, who sat silent and fasting,
"What a breakfast of learning is mine!"

"A breakfast of learning!" with wonder he cried,
And laugh'd, for he thought him mistaken,
"Why, what is it else," the sage quickly replied,
"When I'm making *large extracts from Bacon?*"

CHAPTER III.

I have often *thought to myself*, and I dare say others have thought so too, that it would be easy, in reading a book, supposing only an ordinary portion of sagacity to be used, to discover exactly those points where an author left off when he was sleepy, or when he went to dinner, and where he recommenced his labour after his [illegible] of his meal. There is generally—at least the author is sensible of it himself, and could point it out to the reader—there is generally—that is, unless the writer is uncommonly skilful, or happens to leave off at the conclusion of a topic, or a paragraph, or at the end of a chapter—there is, I say, generally,

a visible infraction in the chain of ideas, and even in the flow of language: the closing sentence, when he surrendered the pen, being perhaps languid, while the commencing one, when he resumed it, carries all the marks of renovated vigor, or perchance the former betrays all the animation and enthusiasm of excited genius, while the latter exhibits nothing but the coldness of incipient energy—for some authors are like post horses, and must be worked into a heat before they can go with speed. These various causes, operating upon intellectual labor, produces often an inequality in the whole, which need never be found in any labour that is merely mechanical, where nothing depends upon the mind, but every thing upon the hands. With this direction, however, to ascertain the matter, which I have thus given to the world, I wonder if any

reader could tell how many times I have quitted and resumed my subject since I began it, down to this line which I am now writing. There is a problem for him, not quite so difficult as some that are to be found in Euclid, even on this side of the *Pons Asinorum*, but which may probably puzzle his sagacity, more than it would be puzzled to account for the measures of a minister, or the sudden coldness of a friend.

I have said that there was a very natural concatenation of causes which led to my introduction into the family of Sir Peter Pix; and now having had my own way, not only in deferring the matter to the present chapter, but even in commencing the said chapter with a different subject, I shall proceed to state some of those causes.

You must know then, courteous and gentle reader, for I hope you are both, that my father's trunk-shop was united to the premises of the said Sir Peter, and I will not say how often I have visited them in my boyish days, to collect the scattered fragments of his saccharine manufacture. But the humble can seldom attach themselves to the great without finding the danger of the connexion: when the colossal statue falls, it drags into ruin the creeping weed that twines itself round the pedestal—when the towering rock crumbles from its base, the lowly shrubs that deck its side are swallowed up in the convulsion.

One night, just as the clock struck twelve, and the watchman had gone to sleep after counting the hour, and the street-brawler was hastening home to bed, and the street-nymph was

retiring from her nocturnal orgies, and the rogue was commencing his, and his victims were snoring in their first sleep; just at this dead hour, this awful moment of time which the writers of the horrid and the terrible choose for the appearance of their ghosts, their bloody daggers, their clanking chains, and their yawning dungeons of impenetrable gloom; at this hour, which tolls the knell of a departed day, and announces the coming in of a new one; which, once a week, brings freedom to the trembling debtor whom awe of duns, and bailiffs—than duns more terrible—confines to his solitary chamber; this important hour which spreads peace and rest to half the world—this solemn—

If there be a situation in the world which is truly pitiable on the one hand, and truly ludicrous on the other,

I have often *thought to myself*, it is that where a man works himself and his reader into a high state of expectation by climax after climax, and when he is just at the top of the ladder finds himself unable to go any further—makes a dead stop—and either stays where he is, or falls back again, by some "lame and impotent conclusion," into greater dulness than he rose from. It is like a singer, who, ascending to a high pitch of voice, gives a sort of promise, which every body accepts, of a still higher reach, but suddenly drops a whole octave lower, and we all know what a disappointment that is. One thing is certain, to be sure; every person may avoid such a bathos, by weighing well the quality and extent of his powers, and, like an able tactician abstaining from every attempt beyond them. This is our first duty: but when we

happen to neglect that, there still remains another, which is what I now mean to discharge: viz. when we find ourselves engaged in an undertaking beyond our powers to complete, prudently to retire from the contest, and rather leave it unfinished than finish it with inadequacy. Farewell then to my ascending climax upon the midnight hour of twelve: and welcome the more humble strain of narrative that follows.

Reason is an admirable faculty! and in nothing more admirable than in the power which it gives us of vindicating our own conduct. I never knew a man in my life, however foolish, or absurd, or guilty his actions may have been, who was fairly unable to say something in his own defence. Plausible, or not plausible, just, or not just, we can always twist an argument

into a sort of shield to cover our defects; and the only difference between the clown and the wit on these occasions is, that the one manufactures a shield of straw while the other produces one of tinsel, shining in our eyes so as to dazzle, but without superior strength to resist the attacks of wisdom.

One night—(I dare say the reader, if he has any curiosity, rejoices to meet with these words of promise once again)—when all our family were quietly retired to rest, and the sound of my father's hammer no longer echoed through the house, nor the shrill accents of my mother's voice accompanied the heavy and quick returning thump of the said hammer, nor my obstreperous gambols joined in the general hubbub, nor—pish!—how difficult it is for a man of genius

to descend. I protest I have just fallen into the same ambition of sublimity as before, and that too without the slightest consciousness of what I was doing—a true sign of natural impulse—but I will desist, only begging the reader to observe the superiority of my said genius, and to note with what dexterity I have varied the concomitants and signs of midnight on this second occasion. Well then, to avoid prolixity, which is a fault I mortally abhor in writing, and in speaking too, especially in public speaking—(I wish some of our parliamentary orators hated it as much, for you must know, reader, that I am a reporter, and therefore interested in the length of their speeches, especially towards three o'clock in the morning, after being in the gallery of the House of Commons from twelve the preceding day)—I shall proceed to relate, with unvar-

nished simplicity, what I have been so long attempting to begin. I am resolved not to be led astray again, by any *ignis fatuus* of discursive and collateral disquisition.

One night—blessed words says the impatient reader—but whither will you lead me?—One night, when we were all fast asleep and snoring, at least my father was, for it was a villainous trick he had with his nose, and I have heard him declare my mother's nose was just as musical, so it is a fair presumption that they were both snoring, and, as we know that we derive many of our physical habits from our parents, at least Haller says so, and I am not arrogant enough to dispute the authority of so great a physiologist, there is every ground for logically inferring that I, being their child, and no doubt conceived in a snore—(I was certainly

snored to many a time during the nine months of my gestation)—was performing on the same wind instrument at the same identical period of time as my honored father and mother were playing on their bassoons; and thus the reader will readily perceive, without my pointing it out to him, the just and accurate, at least the probably just and accurate---and a high degree of probability amounts to moral certainty—nature of the expression I used above, namely, not only that we were all fast asleep, but all snoring. The reconciling of these apparently problematical matters, should never be neglected by a writer who aspires not only to please the imagination, but to satisfy the reason of his readers. Suppose for instance---

Good God! who will dare to deny the truth of that maxim which we

have so often heard urged by moralists as a cause why we should be cautious in our conduct, viz. that no man certainly knows the scope of his intentions, when he beholds in me so striking an instance of its truth? Have I not said, and have I not meant to perform what I said, that I would continue my narrative without one more aberration, without one more divergent course from the main road of my text? And yet, look at me now! Here am I, at the end of my third chapter, and the reader knows no more how I came to be an inmate of Sir Peter Pix's family, or to what the often used monosyllables "one night," refer, than he did at the commencement of this chapter. Sad incertitude of human affairs! Melancholy proof of the instability of man's mind! Deplorable instance of the mutability of things! I will not regret, however, that it has

happened if I *can think to myself*, that any one who reads this volume has learned, from its occurrence, to rectify his notions of moral conduct, and to form the firm resolve of doing that, in this life, which he ought to do, without turning to the right or left in his progress, without listening to the syrens which beset his course, and which tempt him to deviate, but whose temptations he cannot yield to without finding himself, at the end, a loser, and a serious loser in the great account of human actions.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAD just finished the preceding chapter, and was balancing myself upon the hind leg of my chair, my usual attitude of meditation, when a friend dropped in upon me, like an evil genius, to disturb my thoughts, and give them an adverse direction. "Surely," *thought I to myself*, "there is some spell upon my labours: I am not to proceed in them as an ordinary man would proceed, and as all ordinary men and women would wish me to proceed—

> N. B. When I use *ordinary*, I mean it as signifying the common bulk of the human species.—This explanation is for the ladies.

"—wish me to proceed, for no sooner do I come to the crisis of

any particular event, no sooner am I about to tell the most extraordinary accident that ever befel me, and that too while I was snoring, than some diabolical cross-purpose pops in its paw, and, like the touch of the torpedo, benumbs me altogether, or, like the bite of the tarantula, sets me dancing to the tune of some other subject. And in this, *I thought to myself*, how different I am from *Thinks I to myself*, who had that happy power of mental abstraction by which he could excogitate, at his pleasure, in the midst of interruptions which would have crushed all nascent thought in any other head but his. I do profess, that had I been, like he was, listening to the *cacking* oratory of a *cacking* boy,* I should have been ready almost to cack myself with disgust, the stronger sort

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* See *Thinks I to myself*—v. i., p. 24.

of which feeling is very apt to produce singular affections of the bowels and parts adjacent." (*** If the reader puckers up his nose at this unsavoury passage, I hope he will smooth it again—for I have written with the precedent of a CHURCHMAN; and I hope he is too loyal in these ticklish times to turn up his nose at any thing belonging to the church.)

Blessed is the man who can slide the burden of responsibility from his own shoulders to the shoulders of another: and miserable is he who stands last in the file, without a friend upon whom he can fix the weight and issue of actions which he never committed. God be praised that I am not in that predicament, for I shall be guilty of but few weaknesses in the course of these pages, which I will not parallel in my prototype. Were I to do no-

thing but *bump* through a whole chapter, have I not a precedent,* and a bumping one into the bargain? If I would become quite childish, and mean my childishness for wit, may I not "ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross?"† and surely the reader would laugh: if I would exhibit a refined morality under the veil of fiction, may I not depict my mother and my father—sacred names! as infected with the vilest hypocrisy, and the abettors of the meanest evasions,‡ and pass it off for humour? If I would shew myself in love, might I not, with infantine simplicity, consult my apothecary about its symptoms? § and propose bleeding and

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* See *Thinks I to Myself*—passim.

† Ibid. v. i., p. 61.

‡ Ibid. *passim:* the paltry shufflings of his parents form the basis of nearly all his selfish thinkings.

§ See *Thinks I to Myself*, v. i., p. 64. 69.

purging, or look into Buchan's Domestic Medicine,* and discover in my condition all the prognostics of fever, pleurisy, phrenitis, &c. &c. &c. &c.? and might I not, as a cure for the state of my heart, purge my body into a diarrhœa?† Who could deny the *exquisite wit*, the *inimitable humour*, or the *profound knowledge* of *human nature*, which such expedients would display? But I might astonish and delight the reader with other felicities of language and invention, all of them equally the marks of an original and peculiar genius. For if I were in a state of mind which I could not describe, I might express it by a word I did not understand, and say I was *flabbergasted*;‡ or, if I happened to be in a

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* See *Thinks I to myself*, v. i., p. 81.

† Ibid. v. i., p. 82.

‡ Ibid. v. i., p. 98.

terrible anxiety about the issue of any event, I might *think to myself* that I wished I was dead and buried;* or I might, in a similar dilemma, represent myself in the condition of a felon in one of the condemned cells of Newgate,† whose right leg would very probably pull back his left, should the said left leg presume to go far before the right; and this would certainly be a right and left hit at the risible muscles of my reader, full as dexterous as any of the renowned Crib's right and left hits at the maxillary muscles of his black antagonist: nor would it fail to delight all the "quizzy"‡ ladies and gentlemen who might happen to pe-

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* See *Thinks I to myself*, v. i., p. 99.

† Ibid. v. i., p. 110. "I felt just as if my right leg wanted to go, but my left leg pulled it back."

‡ Ibid. v. i., p. 120.

ruse these pages, thus luminously sprinkled with wit and humour.

Seeing, therefore, what I *might* introduce, under the authority of so great a name—"Name! what name?" asks the inquiring reader, "you have told us no name yet." "That is very true. But how can I tell you what I do not know? The author's name is a sort of concealed property—and if you have any suspicions about this concealed property, I cannot do better than refer you to any of the police offices. Suppose, for instance, you were to call at Bow-street, and inquire of Mr. Justice NARES if he knows who is the author of *Thinks I to Myself*; I am convinced his love of truth is so paramount to all other love, that he would tell you, WERE HE HIS OWN BROTHER. If you succeed in your inquiries, let me know: a line ad-

dressed to my publishers will reach me safe: but perhaps you will wish to know *my name* also: excuse me: it is a humane principle of British jurisprudence that no man can criminate himself: I am very well known in Paternoster-row, and especially at No. —: or you may find me any day, precisely at twelve o'clock, in the left-hand box of the Chapter coffee-house, going in from the Row. I have succeeded the late Dr. Buchan as a fixture belonging to the premises. Now I may go on, I suppose?—"Yes."

Seeing therefore, as I said above, what I might introduce under the authority of so great a name—

"Great let me call it—for it equals mine!"*

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* Dr. Young's Revenge, act v., sc. last; not verbatim: but I leave the reader to find out the difference.

and knowing that I do not mean to introduce any such *nugæ*, to give them their softest appellation, I really think I am entitled to claim the admiration and applause of the world for a negative merit, which will entail more benefit on the reader than he is perhaps aware of. I do not mean, however, to insist very strenuously on my claim, because there is certainly no evidence upon which distinctly to found it; but if that point be conceded to me, namely that there *is* no evidence, I shall at least gain one thing, the acknowledgment that I have *not yet* written foolishly, which, added to my declaration that *I will not* write foolishly, may surely be allowed to amount to something like a presumption that I *cannot* write foolishly—and so much for a foolish discussion.

At this very moment, a common

street organ has begun to play under my window—a miserable one it is—no tune, nor any thing that can be likened to a tune: yet—and I am almost ashamed to own it—the effect which an organ always produces upon my mind—that kind of unhinging of thought, which it causes with a sort of talismanic power—that species of tender, aimless melancholy—of pensive despondency, which easily melts me into tears—is now so strong upon me, that I have no energy left to uphold my imagination. I do not think—for I have reason to doubt it—that this feeling is peculiar to me. They then who know what it is to be so depressed —and in a moment—by such a cause, will not only participate in my sensations, but forgive me if I err in telling what they are. I confess myself quite inadequate to convey any idea of those

tumultuous, those soft, those retrospective emotions which instantly throng about my heart at such a time: and having said this, it will be but prudent in me to say no more.

"Pray," said Grub, as soon as he had sat down—that's the name of my friend whom I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—"pray have you heard that it is to be a *broad-bottomed* administration, who are to go *fundamentally* into the consideration of the Catholic question?

"No," said I, somewhat peevishly—for I hate politics, and love solitude, both which, hate and love, Mr. Grub had excited.

"Bless me!" said he, "that's wonderful."

" And bless me!" *I thought to myself*, "I see nothing wonderful in it."

" O yes," continued my tormentor, " the Prince Regent has written a letter, inviting the friends of his early life, to form a part of the administration along with Mr. Perceval."

" And who were, or who are, the friends of his early life?" I thought to myself, the *friends* of the *early life* of the *Prince of Wales* could not be the persons to whose hands I should wish to see the honor, and safety, and prosperity of the British Empire intrusted.

" Who were the friends of his early life?" echoed Mr. Grub.

" Aye; *who* were the friends of his early life?" re-echoed myself.

"Why, all those who agreed with him upon every point of moral and political conduct."

"Admirable definition of friendship!" *I thought to myself.* "But," said I aloud, "what have I to do with this? The country will go on just as well whether I disturb myself about its government or not; and I really cannot help pitying those ephemeral politicians and statesmen who enter so warmly into the policy of the empire, that they are as much in earnest upon a scheme for paying the national debt, as I am in paying my baker's bill, when I have the money. You know, Mr. Grub, that I execrate such triflers and disdain such trifles."

"Do you call the salvation of the empire—the war in the Peninsula—the catholic question—the discussions

with America—the increase of taxes, and the riots in the manufacturing districts—trifles? Are you so indifferent to the prosperity of the state to which you belong, as to sit supinely over your manuscripts, and your proof sheets, and your books, while transactions of a magnitude like these are passing around you? Gracious God! can there be a human being so lost to every feeling of patriotism, to every duty of a citizen, to every noble impulse of a man, as to avow sentiments which a North American savage would blush to own? for even he feels a common interest in the prosperity of the tribe of which he is a member."

"That's very eloquent," *I thought to myself*, "but I like my own opinion best; for, after all, it is the part of true wisdom to create as few cares for ourselves as we can; and I never could see that there was much good

came to a man for caring about those who certainly do not care for him. It is a part of that general dispensation of Providence which we all admire, that every man stands an equal chance for the evils of life and its anxieties, as a sort of personal appendage; and really, therefore, I think it ought to be a part of the system of human prudence to have just as many cares as come in despite of us, without soliciting and inviting those with which we have nothing to do, and from which we cannot reap even the poor consolation of bearing them with patient necessity. Now, among these elective cares, I reckon that foolish solicitude about political matters which are quite out of our reach to controul, either beneficially or injuriously: and, therefore, I have always made it the maxim of my life to feel as little interest in the temporary squabbles of

politicians, their comings in and their goings out, their supporters and their opposers or defamers, as the most indolent philosopher that the world ever saw. But while I avow this, I beg it to be distinctly understood, that I love my country as an Englishman ought to do, and would be the first to stand foremost in the ranks of her defenders if foes, *foreign* or DOMESTIC, should dare assault her independence; and though I am luxuriously indifferent to the indifferent proceedings of public men, yet if a minister ventured to adopt a measure unconstitutional in itself, or leading to consequences dangerous to the liberties of England, however remote those consequences might seem to be, I hope I should then shew, that a man may be too idle or too proud to stir in trifles and waste his life in frivolous contentions, and yet too loyal to see a tyrant working the accomplishment of despotism."

I was so long thinking all these things, that Mr. Grub had time to cool from his oratorical fervour, and when I looked at him, with a sort of apology in my eye for not replying to his observations, he eagerly anticipated my words, by saying—what I propose to relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

MR. GRUB said, "You and I never agree about politics; and, indeed, I came here to talk about a different matter. You must know that I have been writing a volume of poems, which Mr. Foolscap, the bookseller, has promised to print and allow me a share of the profits. An eminent designer has been engaged to provide a drawing for the frontispiece, taken from one of the principal poems; and I can assure you the work will come forth with every external recommendation to public notice."

"And with no internal recommendation," *I thought to myself*;—"But,"

said I, "why have you come to speak to me upon this subject? You know I am no poet, though I sometimes scribble verses; and my judgment in poetry does not extend beyond the simple feeling of pleasure or its contrary. What, then, can I do? I am too poor for a patron, and too humble for a critic."

"But you are candid enough for a friend," said Mr. Grub; "and that is all I want now."

"I promise you my candour," I replied.

"Enough," continued he, "and now I'll read you some of them, and have your opinion."

"Excellent liberality!" *I thought to myself.*

"Here," pursued Mr. Grub— "Here is a piece of which I am really proud. It was written on a real occasion; and must therefore be distinguished from those imaginary things which dwell only in the poet's fancy. I actually saw the object, and I actually felt the emotions which I have here attempted, imperfectly, to describe. I'll read it to you.

LINES

On beholding a Child asleep in the Arms of a Beggar.

Sleep, baby dear, enjoy thy peaceful rest,
Mild as the evening dew on earth descends;
Sleep on, thus cradled on thy mother's breast,
Who fondly o'er thy tranquil slumbers bends.

Child of distress! though want thy birthright be,
And chill neglect may nip thy tender years,
Yet He who bade thee, by his great Decree,
This life to breathe, shall dry thy falling tears.

For, hard indeed the poor man's wretched lot,
The victim of the world's unfeeling scorns,
Did he not know that though by man forgot,
There is a God, the friend of him that mourns.

The smile that plays upon thy lovely face,
Foretells the heav'n of the good and wise;
Where all shall smile who live in faith and grace,
For all is bliss beyond the bounding skies.

Sleep on sweet babe, and bless thy mother's heart,
Who gazes on thee with such rapture now;
Poor houseless wretch! I see the tears that start,
And fall unnotic'd on thy baby's brow.

A wanderer in life's bewilder'd road
Pities the sorrows he cannot relieve;
And pity finds acceptance with that God
Whose will denies the ampler power to give.

"But why *didn't* you give her a shilling? It would have done the poor wretch more good than all this sentimental effusion, which weeps over her sorrows, because it costs less

to shed a poetical tear, than to bestow a real bounty."

I looked at Mr. Grub, who was silent, but in whose face I saw strong marks of pride mortified, and conscience stricken: the one was the pride of the author, who waited for his verses to be applauded, the other the contrition of the man who felt the rebuke with more sensibility than it was intended to excite. My own conscience smote me now, for I thought I had hit him a little too hard; so I sought to qualify the venom I had infused by the antidote of praise. I commended the stanzas, and continued to commend them till I saw the clouds of contrition gradually dispersing before the influence of those jocund feelings which well-timed panegyric always awakens in the heart

of man, and I felt an honest satisfaction in doing so.

"You really think the poetry good then," said he, with a smile.

"Undoubtedly," said I, with another.

"I thought you would," replied he, with a significant nod.

"As a matter of course," rejoined I, with an inclination of the body no less significant.

"You see," said he, "Mr. Foolscap understands his own interest pretty well."

"Just as well as you do your own reputation," I answered. "The ends of both will be accomplished in a

way which neither of you expect, I'll answer for it."

"That's friendly of you, however," said Mr. Grub.

"I am sure it's sincere if you rightly comprehend it," *I thought to myself.*

"The volume is chiefly composed," continued he, "of similar materials; grave and sentimental, for if I have any genius at all, it certainly lies that way. You shall hear another piece."

I smiled and he went on.

REMEMBRANCE.

By murm'ring streams I careless lie
And watch the sun-beam on the wave,
And think, with many a heartfelt sigh,
Of her that's mould'ring in the grave.

Gay fancy paints her lovely form
As soft as when in youthful bloom;
Ere yet it sunk beneath the storm;
Ere yet it found an early tomb.

Ye dear deceits! Oh still remain,
Oh still before my reason play;
Thus cheat my hours of anxious pain,
And fancied bliss restore each day.

"I like that better because it's shorter," said I.

"A short approbation," replied Mr. Grub, "but in my opinion not a just one. The other has infinitely more merit."

I did not want to talk, so I suffered Mr. Grub to have his own way; by which I not only saved myself, but pleased him.

"But," pursued Mr. Grub, "however much you may admire this---'

Observe. I never said a word about *admiring*: this shews an author's egotism: had I used the word *hate*, he would have softened it down to *dislike.*

"However much you may admire this," continued Mr. Grub, "I have a piece which I am sure you will admire still more highly: I see what your taste is, and it will suit it to a hair. It has all the pretty turns of a modern writer, who will be very sore I fancy when he reads it. It was really written extemporaneously one morning while sitting at breakfast with a lady who shall be nameless. I call it "the Rose Bud," these are the lines:

On slender stem the rose-bud waves,
And drinks, reviv'd, the morning dew,
Expands to the rising sun its leaves,
And emulates the coral's hue.

I mark its blush, its modest glow,
I bow, and press it to my lips;
Thus in the arms of beauty low,
Man bends to love, and bending sips.

The modest wanton waves its head,
Nor seems to shun my warm embrace;
Till, on its luscious bounties fed,
I throw it hence, and leave the place.

Ah! thus, my Julia, tyrant man
Too often crops perfection's flower,
Feasts on its charms with curious scan,
The plaything of a sportful hour.

"Pray," said I, do you propose to lull your readers with nothing but strains like these? Are they to have pages of sensibility, calling upon them to use their handkerchiefs, or to distend their bosoms with sympathetic sighs, while the god of laughter is banished from your volume?"

"Oh no," rejoined Mr. Grub; "tears and smiles: but the tears first

and the smiles after, like a tragedy and a farce, or the catastrophe of a novel. I have plenty of merriment I warrant you; plenty that will make the reader laugh, if he have any risible propensities in his nature."

"I hope you have," I replied; "for every thing is now converted into a joke, even the pulpit and the throne, so much has our love of the ludicrous increased; and a *good joke* is *now* just that thing which would have made our ancestors weep with indignation. But let me hear some of your merry things, for I would rather laugh in bitterness than cry in sorrow."

"I have nothing that will make you give us such a wormwood laugh, as that which you mention, that *risus Sardonicus* of the ancients; but some-

thing which may perhaps create in you the true jolly laugh of the moderns, the sign of good humour, and the cause of it. That's the laugh I love, and heaven bless the man who invented it; for it buries the wrinkles of care in the gay and happy dimples of a smile. But come: without talking about what I'll do, let me try if I can do it. Here's something will succeed I think :---

THE ATTENTIVE CHAMBERMAID.

A vet'ran, who had long serv'd his king,
And lost in his service an eye,
Found honour a sad scurvy thing,
So return'd to his country to die.

Now as two eyes are reckon'd genteel,
And the want of one just the reverse,
The wound which no surgeon could heal,
He fill'd up with an eye made of glass.

But happ'ning to be once benighted,
While trav'lling the north country road,

He put up at an inn, and was lighted
To bed by a fine strapping maid.

When, putting his hand in his pocket,
He gave a shilling, 'twas all he was able,
Then—taking his eye from its socket—
He bade her, put that on the table.

The nymph with composure remain'd,
For wonder forbad her to fly,
When she curt'sied, at length, and exclaim'd,
"I'se waiting for t'other large eye."

"Why that approaches to merriment," said I, "but it certainly is not merry. At least it does not strike me as such, though that is only an individual criterion, and a doubtful one; for I have seen a very sorry jest set an audience in a roar, while a genuine stroke of wit or humour has been received with silence. All men do not perceive the ridiculous with the same feelings, as all men do not acknowledge the pathetic with the same

quickness of emotion; therefore, Mr. Grub, do not imagine because I am insensible to the ludicrous colouring of your 'large eye,' that other men may not have an eye to see it."

"That's very true," said Mr. Grub, "and though I have very great confidence in your critical perspicuity, yet, as I am no catholic, I do not hold your decisions to be infallible. Besides, after all, this is but a matter of mere feeling, and not of accurate reasoning. No rule can be laid down why a man should laugh if he does not feel merry, or why one man should not laugh where another looks grave. So, if you please, I'll read something which I think *must* excite your risible faculties to their fullest extent."

"I should reckon that a very injudicious exordium", *I thought to my-*

self, for, "excite expectation, and depend upon it, it will outrun the plain matter of reality by which it is to be gratified."

I was interrupted in these cogitations by Mr. Grub, who began, with a smirking aspect, to read, as followeth:

THE CHAPLAIN'S NOSE.

A vessel at sea was expected to sink,
  To save her no more could be done,
The crew look'd aghast, for ev'ry one thought
  That his glass of existence was run.

The chaplain, who dearly lov'd eating and drinking,
  And besides was a very great smoker—
Had a nose on his face—if a nose I may call it—
  Which resembl'd a red hot kitchen poker.

He assembled the crew, and began to read prayers;
  He reminded them all of salvation;
And he begg'd they would hit on the readiest way
  To save themselves all from damnation.

They listen'd with awe: their quids were unchew'd:
Their faces look'd pallid and grim:
While each jogg'd his neighbour, and ask'd with a sigh,
If he happen'd to know how to swim.

In the midst of this scene, a lubberly boy,
Unconscious what danger was near,
Burst forth with a laugh, full loud and full long,
And by no means expressive of fear.

Now the chaplain thought fit to reprove this sad dog,
So he ask'd him the cause of his laughter:
"It is," said he, tittering, "to think how your NOSE
Will HISS when it comes in the water."

"There's point for you I think," said Mr. Grub.

"I'll not dispute the point with you," I replied; for, after all, *I thought to myself*, the Chaplain's Nose was really better than the Veteran's Eye: but that was not the only cause of my brevity. I was heartily tired of the

conversation, and wished to be delighted no longer with my friend's lucubrations. I thought, therefore, the best way was to agree shortly with him, that I might escape a long discussion. I reckoned without my host, however; Mr. Grub, like most authors, preferred even censure to unsatisfying concurrence, for the latter looked like indifference to a thing not worth notice, while the former at least exalted its object into comparative importance.

"Good God!" said Mr. Grub, "was ever any thing so unlucky? I have left the third division of my work, called *Fun and Laughter*, at home. What I have been reading to you I only meant for humourous: but my *Fun and Laughter* would have made you laugh indeed."

I smiled.

"Aye, aye," continued my tormentor, "I would have expanded that smile to a grin I warrant you. Shall I step home for it? Perhaps you are not particularly engaged. Perhaps you could spare me two or three hours more."

I sighed, and looked at my own manuscript, and repeated "one night" in a low murmur.

"What did you say about night?—O, ho! if you are that way inclined, and sigh with so melancholy an air, I have something that will suit your humour to a tittle. That, in fact, is the peculiar feature of my book: a mixture of all denominations, so that the reader can hardly be in any mood but I shall be sure to hit him. Let him be lively, or let him be dull; let him be splenetic, or let him be amorous; let him

be inclined to moral seriousness or satiric venom, he will meet with something in this volume that shall feed his humour. For instance, you seem to be gravely sentimental at this moment: I turn to p. 49 of my MS., and find some elegiac lines to "Death," which I will read you. But before I do so, I must, in justice to my own merits, call your attention to the singular versatility of talent by which I am enabled to embrace so many topics, and so variously to treat them. Egotism, however, I detest; so I shall say no more about myself, only you will allow that I was justified in saying what I did. But really I am tantalizing you in a sad way—[I sighed again] —instead of nourishing your sentimental and pathetic feelings, I am striving to generate disappointment and spleen: but "Death" will soon end all that—[I started at his emphatic

tone]—Bless me, my dear friend; I mean my "Lines to Death:" no, no, God forbid the grim monarch, the King of Terrors, as he is very prettily and very aptly called, should end either you or me yet: I should, indeed, be nipped in the bud, instead of dying with all my 'blushing honors thick upon me.'"

"I should blush to own such honors," *I thought to myself*, "for the honor of doing trivial things foolishly, is an honor begot and maintained by weakness; but some men find honor where others would feel only disgrace. Thus Mr. Finnerty, now *honorably* incarcerated in Lincoln jail, always boasts of the HONOR of having been pilloried; and thus Daniel Defoe used to pull his wig aside, and shew where his ears had been cropped, in the same

machine of dignity (to which, by the bye, he wrote an ode full of praises), when he wished to impress a by-stander with the full extent of *his honors.* I have no doubt also, that Mr. Cobbett will point to the word *Newgate,* in his Register, hereafter, and exult in the *honor* of having been sent there, while every honest man will wish he had been *exalted* to the *highest eminence* which can be conferred upon the tenants of that renowned building. As much may be said of some other of his worthy co-adjutors and inmates; and I will add, in the words of Shakspeare, and in the spirit of Antony,

"But these are all, all *honorable* men."

While I was thinking these things, Mr. Grub was preparing for the *viva voce* utterance of *his* thoughts:

and now Death stood before me in terrors which I cannot describe: so the reader must think for himself.

"That melancholy silence," observed Mr. Grub, "tells me how peculiarly welcome will now be my solemn strains. Ah, my friend! I have often thought, and often said, there must be a physical consonance of feeling between the reader and his subject, before any author can be adequately understood. I should be very sorry to have my *fun and laughter* perused by one who had just done wiping his eyes after reading my serious and pathetic effusions: and I should be equally sorry to have my pathetic effusions drivelled over by a man whose muscles had hardly resumed their natural state after riotous and excessive laughter."

I always disliked metaphysical criticism, and this made me hate it.

"You, however," as I before said, "are just in a fit state for what I have to read; and that I may strike the iron while 'tis hot, I'll begin forthwith."

Mr. Grub's face assumed external woe while he begun: mine expressed real woe while I listened.

TO DEATH.

Written in a Fit of Despondency.

Oh thou! the rich and gay one's dread,
  Terrific monarch, hail!
A weary wanderer fain would pass,
  Thy dim and shadowy vale.

Thy terrors, DEATH, are lost and gone
  To him that mourneth here;
Thy form he views with placid smile,
  Thy stroke without a tear.

The grave's his house and resting place
From all his pains and cares:
'Tis there he sleeps, to wake no more
Till the last trump he hears.

Oh, happy state! oh wish'd-for bourne!
Oh, dim discover'd shore!
Take to thy gloomy house of peace
One restless traveller more!

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"What do you laugh at?"

"At hypocrisy and falsehood."

"Where do you find either?" said Mr. Grub, a little nettled.

"Where?" replied I, "in every line of what you have been reading. Pray when did you write those lines: at what moment, and under what circumstances?"

"At what moment, and under what circumstances?" echoed Mr. Grub; "I'll tell you candidly and truly. It was one night—"

"When?" I exclaimed with eagerness.

"One night—"

"One night! one night! do you say?"

"Yes, it was one night—"

"Dear, lovely words," I burst forth, as I looked upon the paper that lay before me, "when shall I be able to bring you into day? When shall I be permitted to follow out the dark track into full and glorious light? But go on: I ask your pardon for this interruption."

"No apologies, my dear friend," said Mr. Grub: "I am no stranger to all those sympathies of our nature, which are sometimes excited by the most trivial and apparently unmeaning causes. Ah! perhaps there has been a night when love held empire over your heart, and when the dear freedom of it led to some tragical catastrophe: and the very mention of the word fills you with tender emotion. Perhaps there has been a night when some dread mishap befel you, the painful recollection of which still occupies your mind: perhaps even there *may* have been a *Knight*, (for you are an author as well as myself) whose dark and clouded brow has harrowed up the stream of your genius, or turned its refluent course back upon yourself, when you fondly hoped to see it take quite a different course. In short, when I think how many great and

magnificent events may occur under Heaven's starry cope, I am at no loss to conceive a variety of reasons for your late extraordinary agitation: but I hope it has now subsided by its own effervescence, and that I may proceed to satisfy your interesting inquiry."

Dullness is as good as opium or poppies. It has a wonderful tendency to allay nervous irritability, and compose the mind. Had I swallowed thirty drops of laudanum, or awaked from a refreshing sleep, I could not have been more placid than I became after this harangue from Mr. Grub. Let me then shut the door upon my anxieties, by beginning a new chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

"Now, Mr. Grub," said I, "let me know the mood you were in when you wrote those lines at which I have presumed to laugh—for really much depends upon it. It was one night you say—"[an involuntary sigh escaped me]—; the apt and common retreat of poetical inspiration, and of release from wordly thoughts—

"Let slaves to business—bodies without soul,
Important blanks in Nature's mighty roll,
Solemnize nonsense in the day's broad glare,
We NIGHT prefer—which heals or hides our care."

"Aye," said Mr. Grub, "those lines were written by a true son of Genius, poor Churchill:—brief was his day, when he vanished like a me-

teor from our eyes. You recollect how he continues—

"Rogues justified, and by success made bold—
Dull fools and coxcombs sanctified by gold—
Freely may bask in Fortune's partial ray,
And spread their feathers op'ning to the day;
But *thread-bare* Merit dares not shew the head,
Till vain Prosperity retires to bed.
Misfortunes, like the owl, avoid the light—
The sons of CARE are always sons of NIGHT.

"*He* was a son of Care indeed," continued Mr. Grub, "but his name shall know no night."

"What! will it survive the grave?"

"Ah! there you have me: for, as Beattie says,

"When shall spring visit the mould'ring urn,
Oh, when shall it dawn on the NIGHT of the grave!"

"Never!" said I, with a mournful emphasis—"never will the tenant of that gloomy void awaken to the same joys as those they left behind them in this life. The glories of the author will become extinct; and Milton and Shadwell may shake hands together in the next, with no other pre-eminence, alas! than virtue—

"Let them sleep, let them sleep on,
Till this stormy NIGHT be gone,
And the eternal morrow dawn;
Then the curtains will be drawn;
And they waken with that light,
Whose day shall never sleep in NIGHT."

"You are beyond me now," said Mr. Grub, "I don't know who that is from."

"Crashaw," I replied, "that amiable enthusiast and true poet, of whom

it has been said, "*that he set a language for the angels to converse in.*"

"I never read him," answered Mr. Grub.

"Then you have one pleasure to come, and a great one."

"Night," continued Mr. Grub, "has always been a favourite topic of description with poets. You remember the fine one by Dryden?"

"O yes," I replied,—for I really began to fear that we should go on *till* night at this rate, and that I should not go beyond *one* night that day.— "Let us return to the original subject of discourse, Mr. Grub."

"Well then," said he, "without

any further circumlocution, I will tell you the history of my elegiac stanzas."

"Elegiac! what is Death dead? and have you written his epitaph, or an elegy upon him?"

"Oh, Mr. ——," (I was just going to mention my name—but that may be known at the Chapter Coffee-house, as I have already said)—"oh, Mr. ——," exclaimed my friend, I mean my tormentor—there is nothing in the metonomy, however, for similar sincerity is practised every day—if you doubt it, look at *Thinks I to Myself*, the author of which *thinks* Human Nature as great a scoundrel as Dr. Cheyne did, when he called her a rogue and a vagabond, or she would not need so many laws to keep her in order), "you cannot surely be so igno-

rant as not to know"—(I reddened at the word ignorant—but I was blowing my nose at the same time, so Mr. Grub might think the "ambiguous effusion," as Sir Richard Steele calls a blush, because it is at once the livery of vice and virtue, was nothing more than the straining commonly attendant upon that common act; and I hope he did, for I should hate to be irritable without a cause)—"you surely cannot be so ignorant," said he, "as not to know that elegiac means every thing that is sorrowful or mournful (look at Johnson's third definition of the word) as well as being used in elegies, or pertaining to elegies, (look at his first and second definitions)."

I bowed assent.

"I once won a *go* of gin and two

nips of ale upon that very question, at the Eccentrics," exclaimed Mr. Grub.

Now I was indeed ignorant, and did not scruple to acknowledge my ignorance. "A *go* of *gin* and two *nips* of ale at the Eccentrics!" I reiterated. "You must enlighten me, my friend, for I know not what you mean: I cannot now *go* with you, I confess: my apprehension is completely *nipped* in the bud, and is not *eccentric* enough to comprehend your words."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Grub, are you not an *Eccentric?*"

"Eccentric enough, I am afraid; but not possessing that eccentricity to which you now allude."

"Then you do not belong to the society of Eccentrics?"

"I belong to society itself; the greater part of which is eccentric, Heaven knows.

"Pooh, pooh," replied Mr. Grub, "I mean a society calling itself the Eccentrics, which meets every night at a tavern in May's Buildings. Do you belong to that?"

"No."

"Then," said he, "I may say to you, as you did to me, (speaking of Crashaw,) you have one pleasure to come, and a great one. Sir, it is a society to which every man of genius belongs: I am a member of it myself."

I contented myself with quoting Pope:

"Whose own example strengthens all his laws,
And is himself that great sublime he draws."

"I must introduce you," continued Mr. Grub, "to this society, where you will find more wit, humour, talent, learning, and oratory, than in any other society in Europe! We must have you for a member: I'll propose you any night you please: but talking of night brings me back to my promise, from the performance of which I have so strangely deviated."

I could have wished to ask a few questions about this wonderful society, but the prospect of emancipation from a visit which had become intolerably irksome, made me suppress my curiosity.

"Well, Sir, one night, when my mind was a little dejected by drinking some bad ale, and my feelings of depression a little aggravated by reflecting that I had lost two sixpenny rub-

bers at cribbage, I sat down, and with a sort of exuberant flow of imagination, with a kind of unpremeditated effusion of fancy, I composed those verses to Death: and the facts being as I have just stated, I added, that they were written in a fit of despondency. Causes thus trivial, you see, produced that composition."

I could not refrain from another fit of laughter as I heard this account of the origin of Elegiac Verses to Death, written in a fit of despondency! The operation of bad ale, and the remembrance of two sixpenny rubbers at cribbage being lost, led to these pathetic declarations of *tædium vitæ* which the reader has perused, and to that mournful and imploring cry of

"Take to your gloomy house of peace
One restless wanderer more."

Perhaps, *I thought to myself,* as good an account might sometimes be found of half the sentimental volumes which deluge the overgorged mind of the people, that part of them at least which indulges in weeping over the fictitious woes of clumsy swains and fainting nymphs.

I was aroused from this brief meditation by a sight which mine eyes beheld with gladness. It was no other than the perpendicular elevation of Mr. Grub's body, with its subsequent horizontal motion towards a table whereon lay his hat and stick. Heaven be praised! I mentally ejaculated, I behold the termination of my sorrows. I shall now have leisure to finish, before night, that "one night" which I have so often begun. He is going—he is—

"I am just going to step backwards," said Mr. Grub.

I fell back in my chair as I saw him quit the room, leaving his infernal hat behind him, and uttered a heavy, dismal groan. "Curse upon the forms of civilized life," I exclaimed, "which forbid me to tell this intruder, *begone,—I want your absence*; and curse upon my vacillating feebleness of mind, that I cannot snatch a power beyond those forms, and bid him go. Am I to be broken in upon by every frivolous intruder, in this way? Are my hours of retirement and study to be blown upon by every gad-fly and filled with rottenness when they should produce rich and grateful fruit? No, it shall not be, for when he comes back, I'll—"

"I have just been thinking, while

I was backwards," said Mr. Grub, entering the room, "that before I go, I'll give you a specimen or two of my amatory compositions, for I have tried my pen that way too."

"You have tried my patience every way," I muttered to myself.

By the bye, I was taken unawares, or I would certainly have fulfilled my resolution, and bade him depart.

"I am most grateful, my dear friend, for the patience with which you have endured my interruption, and I can only promise, in return, to listen to your compositions with equal patience. But I apprehend I have something to read, which will require no patience to hear: perhaps, indeed, I might rather say it will excite impatience to hear more. Tedious preambles how-

ever are unnecessary; so I'll read you *The Death of Life.*"

"The what?" I interrogated.

"*The Death of Life*, a striking title, isn't it? People when they see this in the contents, will be curious to turn to the page and read it. There is nothing like your odd names; they take at once; they are as valuable as a good name, for they always prepossess one in their favor. *Lines to a Friend*, would excite no attention now-a-days; but *Lines to him who will understand them* have a quaint mystery about them which is sure to take. So I have seen a general eagerness to read an epistle called "Heroic Couplets to a Hero, who if he is wise will heroically receive them;" and an equal avidity to peruse, "Stanzas to a Butcher, upon the Humanity which he displayed in

killing an Ox: by a Fishmonger who never sold crimp'd Cod:" but had the one been called simply, *an Heroic Epistle*; and the other, *Stanzas to a Friend on his Humanity*, I am positive nobody would have cared to read them. Such is the importance of a good title."

"*Fronti nulla fides*," said I.

"I don't understand that," replied Mr. Grub, "for I suppose its either Greek or Latin: if so, I can't answer it, that's all. I am none of your manufactured geniuses, made up out of the stuff provided by other men; none of your chemical mixtures, merely pouring out of one bottle into another."

"That is in Tristram Shandy," said I.

"I know that," answered Mr. Grub; "and what I mean to say is —that I am like Shakspeare—."

"He was a deer stealer," said I.

"That's true again," replied Mr. Grub, extremely nettled, which was what I wanted, "I did not mean, however, to compare myself with him on that qualification, but only on the general resemblance between us, that he was self-educated, and so am I; that he drew from nature alone, and so do I."

So did Stephen Duck, the thresher," said I, "so did Ann Yearsley, the milk-woman; so did James Woodhouse, the shoemaker; so did Robert Bloomfield, another shoemaker; so did Nathaniel Bloomfield, the tailor; so did Joseph Blacket, the shoemaker

again; and so have many besides. Nature, you should remember, produces alike the diamond in the mine, and the putrid maggot in carrion horse flesh. She is equally the prolific mother of Alexander who subdued the world, and of him who last swung upon a gallows; from her plastic hands have proceeded the mighty mind of a Newton, and the degraded intellect of an idiot. Her source is capacious, and many streams issue from it; some flowing with heavenly lustre and pellucid brightness; others creeping along their muddy course, foul and disfigured by native opacity, and acquired filth. But they all draw their origin from nature."

"A very apt illustration," rejoined Mr. Grub, with a distorted smile.

"I'm glad you like it," said I, with

something of malicious courtesy in my manner.

"But it does not appear to me," continued Mr. Grub, "to alter the truth of what I said, that Shakspeare and I both drew from nature."

"Certainly not," I replied, "I think I have proved the perfect consistency of such a similarity, as to its primary cause."

"Then," said Mr. Grub, "that being conceded, I hope it will be allowed that there must be a sort of original cast of composition, a species of peculiar phraseology, a kind of unfamiliar combination of ideas, by which the exertions of untutored genius are always discriminated. But egotism I detest—and therefore I'll say no more of myself: that task I leave to others."

"You had better perform it yourself," said I, "as I apprehend it will be done more to your satisfaction."

"Perhaps so," rejoined Mr. Grub, "if I could be pleased with a fool's praises."

I took a pinch of snuff.

"I know you are apt to snarl," continued Mr. Grub, "so, while you don't bite, I'll say nothing."

I have bitten hard enough, *I thought to myself*, and you are snarling at the pain. But I did not wish to mangle as well as bite him. I certainly wanted to enjoy some sort of revenge for the intolerable enthralment with which he had visited me; and I pleased myself with the idea that I had been successful. I made no reply, therefore, to

his insinuation, but took another pinch of snuff, and turned to the other side of my chair.

"Now," said Mr. Grub, "if you are disposed, I'll read you my Death of Life; I think you'll like it, though you are so pettish.

Another pinch of snuff, and Mr. Grub began.

Charming nymph with sloe-black eye,
Auburn tresses, graceful mien,
Must I for thy beauties sigh,
Lovely girl of sweet fifteen.

No! together let us haste;
Fly the world's unsafe alloy;
Mutual, endless pleasure taste,
Mingle, riot, die with joy.

On beds of roses let's recline;
Sweetest violets form *thy* pillow;
But thy heaving bosom *mine*,
Heaving like the gentle billow.

Stretch'd at length, with arms entwin'd;
Kisses take, and kisses give:
Then rise to raptures more refin'd,
And *die of that by which we live.*

"Warm, warm, and glowing," said I.

"I'm glad you think so," said he: "I profess I am warmed with reading it. This will tickle the fancies of —— eh! You know what I mean. Bless you, it's of no use writing, unless you write to the purpose."

"So thought Rochester, and Sir Charles Sedley," said I.

"And so," replied Mr. Grub, "thinks a writer of the present day, who will feel his laurels wither as he reads those lines, I warrant. But I have some more pieces of this kind,

just as good in their way. Here's another, called the *Last Desire*, which I am sure will please you."

"I like the title," said I, "it suits admirably with my wishes on the present occasion."

"Sir," said Betty, opening the door suddenly, "dinner is on the table."

"I jumped up with extacy—Mr. Grub caught hold of my coat tail—I struggled to go—he held me—"my mutton," said I—"my verses," said he—"it will be cold," said I—"I'll not keep you two minutes," said he—"Upon my soul—" "Nay, by G—," cried Mr. Grub, "you shall not go till you hear this, and then I'll be off." "Betty, put the mutton to the fire for a few moments."—"Yes Sir."—"And now Mr. Grub, I do en

treat—" "Say nothing my dear friend: say nothing. I'll read it in a twinkling, and then be off like a shot."

"I'll be shot but you shall," *I thought to myself*, as I resumed my seat, my ideas wandering to a smoking shoulder of baked mutton with potatoes under it: a dish I'm remarkably fond of.

Mr. Grub began.

Oh let me clasp within my arms,
Roguish beauty, wanton fire!
Luxuriate free o'er woman's charms,
And fan the spark of hot desire.

Oh let me wander side by side,
Through flowery dales or meadows green,
In autumn or in summer's pride,
When brightens or when fades the scene.

Oh let me plead the melting tale,
Whisper softly in her ear;
With sighs out-breathe the western gale,
With vows repress each rising fear.

Oh let me in some grateful shade,
Side by side with beauty lie,
Hold to my heart some panting maid,
And read love's language in her eye.

Oh let me press the juicy lip!
Or bending touch the downy breast,
From those twin orbs such raptures sip,
As make me envy not the blest.

And if all these desires I gain,
And revel in my boundless store,
Why then I hope, to ease my pain,
The nymph will *grant me something more!*

"Mr. Grub, good morning."

"But, my dear friend, what do you think—"

"I only think that my mutton is cooling: good morning."

"Well, good morning, but I should like to know—"

"Upon my soul I would not stay to give an opinion for thrice the value of my shoulder of mutton. So once more good morning: you'll excuse me I know."

"I suppose I must—else, I vow to God—"

"No rash vows—there's your hat, and there's your stick—and here's your MS., and that's the door.—Give me your hand: good bye."

"I think you use me very uncivilly."

"Civility! Pooh! my mutton!"

I got him to the street door, bade

him a hasty farewel, and shut it almost in his face, repeating, as I sat down to my mutton,

"Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,
Sir, let me see you and your works no more."
POPE.

While I am dining, the chapter may as well finish.

CHAPTER VII.

If I were capable of indulging any feelings of pride or vanity; if I possessed any weakness so common to authors, of believing that what I write is of importance to mankind, I own I should be tempted to imagine, on the present occasion, that my reader or readers was or were fretting with vexatious disappointment at not finding the wished-for bourne of all their labours: I mean the manner in which I became an inmate of Sir Peter Pix's family. When, however, I use the word labour, as applied to the reader in perusing these pages, Heaven knows I am guiltless of any intention to insinuate that it is any labour at all to read

what I write; or if it be a labour it is just such a one as Macbeth describes:

The labour we delight in physics pain.

There is, to be sure, something extremely melancholy in the emotions of "hope deferred!" and all curiosity is but expectation, and all expectation is but hope: that is to say, a sort of hope; a metaphysician would prove its generic affinity, without insisting upon its specific similarity: for I confess it would not be very easy to prove that a thief who is expecting the gallows therefore hopes that he shall be hung. He would probably rather be of the opinion of the Catholic priest, who was asked whether he would prefer being hanged for obeying the Pope, or excommunicated for obeying the Senate? "In truth," said he, "for my

part, I had rather be excommunicated thirty years than be hanged a quarter of an hour." After all, a great deal might be written in praise of hanging by a man who was sure he would not be hanged for it. The only danger would be that a panegyric upon hemp would raise the price of the commodity, and so many great men would aspire to the cord, that it might be impossible to oblige all the applicants, supposing some of them should not like to be turned off. It becomes, therefore, a matter of policy to exalt hanging to its present "painful pre-eminence," upon the same principle as the Scotch preacher, haranguing to a congregation in the Highlands upon the punishments of the damned, proclaimed Hell to be a place intolerably cold, where a man's nose would drop off from the effects of frost, as a

waxen one would from the effect of heat: just such a spot, in fact, as Milton describes—

> "a frozen continent
> Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
> Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
> Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
> Of ancient pile;"

> "the parching air
> Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
> Thither by harpy-footed furies hal'd,
> At certain revolutions, all the damn'd
> Are brought——"

> "to starve in ice
> Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
> Immovable, infix'd and frozen round."

"Great God!" said an astonished and orthodox auditor to the pious presbyterian as he was leaving the desk, "where will you find authority in all scripture for the doctrine you have just been preaching? Hell a cold

place! Burn me if ever I heard such a thing before."

"Haith mon!" rejoined the wily theologian, "do ye ken that if I said it was a hot place, a' the chiels would rin there to warm themsels."

Now I contend that this was very astute and wholesome policy, in a man who was anxious to preserve the souls of his flock. It is by the opposites of what we endure in this life that we are incited to strive for the blessedness of the next. The white man's devil is black, and the black man's devil is white; in the Mohamedan's paradise there is plenty of wine, because they are allowed none here; and the Christian hopes for the holy calm of satisfied desires, because in this state all his desires are never satisfied. Upon the same analogy the pious Presbyte-

rian acted, knowing that his congregation had an instinctive love of heat, because they were reared in the habitual sufferings of cold. And upon the same principle I shall abstain from all panegyric upon hanging; not because the subject is *illaudable,* but lest, by making it respectable, I should make it fashionable, till at last it would be impossible to enter into any house without thinking of the French proverb, *Il ne faut pas parler de corde dans la maison d'un pendu.*" *

The reader, perhaps, may not think that there exists any danger, at least not any serious danger, of men hang-

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* For the benefit of my country readers and my countrywomen, I shall translate this thus:

"We should not speak of a rope in the family of a man who has been hanged."

ing themselves for pleasure. I do not mean to say that they would hang themselves from pleasure: but might they not do it from ambition or from whim, and especially if the thing once became dignified in itself, as I contend it might be made, by such a panegyric as I could write upon it? Even with all its present disadvantages, it is by no means unpopular, as every day testifies. Very recently the public papers contained an instance of two men, (to be sure they were Irishmen) tossing up which should hang the other; and he that won actually proceeded to perform the job, suspending his companion upon the arm of a tree. A police officer happened to be passing by, and cut him down; but what did he get for his humanity? As soon as the man had recovered from the effect of five minutes strangulation, he got upon his legs, and began to buffet his deliverer,

declaring that he had no business to interfere, for his friend had won the toss, and had a right to hang him.

Now who will pretend to say that this man was not fond of choking, when he risked his life upon the turn up of a halfpenny? Perhaps I shall be told that no fair inference can be drawn from the fact, because of the country from which they both came: that is to be sure an *argumentum ad hominem*, and the thing itself reminds me of a wager between two honest Hibernians, full as extraordinary as any in the annals of sporting, for it involved as complete an oblivion of personal identity as the well-known story of the man who accused his nurse of having changed him for another when an infant.

"I'll hold you a pot of porter," said Pat, "that you don't carry me

up to the top of that ladder yonder, in your hod, without tumbling."

"Done!" says Murphy; and "done!" says Pat, and squats himself in the hod. Murphy hoists him on his shoulder and ascends, cautiously, step by step; but when just at the top, there was one of the rundles out, and Murphy's foot slipped: Pat's heart beat with joy: Murphy held tight however, and reached the scaffolding. "You have won the pot of beer," said Pat with a sigh, as he slipped out of the hod, "but by Jasus I thought you'd lost it when your foot slipped."

I am not to be beat out of my argument, however, by any national reflections. Ireland may be the land of practical bulls, but England is the country for hanging. We do it here with a deliberation and *sang froid*, with

a sort of *goût*, which no other nation can boast of, and therefore he would be a bad citizen who should endeavour to generalize a practice which has a manifest tendency to destroy all citizenship. As a proof of the calm and prudent way in which an Englishman can sometimes perform a job of that kind, I am tempted to relate the following fact. I say *fact*, because it was told to me by one as such, whose love of truth I believe was too great to suffer him to indulge in the traveller's privilege.

A man residing on the borders of Northamptonshire had lost all his money by gambling. One day—(these words will be more prosperous than "*One Night*" I hope)—when he had literally reduced himself to his last penny, he quitted the gaming table with a cool but determined resolution to hang him-

self. He had engaged himself in the morning to drink tea with a party where his wife and daughter were to be; but before evening came he had fixed a different sort of engagement. He went to a shop in the neighbourhood, and with the only penny he had *in* the world bought a rope, with which he intended to go *out* of the world. With this rope in his pocket he returned home, retired to his own room, and began to form the noose. Upon examination, however, he thought the cord was hardly strong enough to bear his weight, so he returned to the shop, and asked for a thicker one. It was shewn to him, and the price was five farthings; but he had not five farthings to give. "I'll toss you for the odd farthing," said the intended suicide; they tossed, and he won it. He went away with his rope, tied it round his neck, and when his wife

and daughter returned they found him stiff.

This was no less an instance of the ruling passion being strong in death, or at least to death, than of the calculating indifference with which my countrymen can encounter that grim monarch. It would puzzle an ordinary reader, however, to discover what possible connection there can be between this dissertation upon hanging, and the legitimate object of this work. An ordinary reader it may, I'll admit, for that may be done by a very ordinary occurrence; but I am to be judged by minds of a different mould; at least if I am judged righteously and equitably, none but an extraordinary intellect can comprehend the sort of mysterious trick by which my digressions are fastened to the narrative—nay, if it were worthy of my talents,

I could prove that this very disquisition upon hanging was written only to shew how dexterously I could hang it upon the body of my story, making it fit thereon much better than some tailors can make a body coat fit. I disdain the task, however; it may be allowed to the daring few, to "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art:" and to those who find any difficulty in following all my zig zag and tortuous and serpentine flowings of thought, I reply in the language of the poet:

"A perfect judge will read each work of wit,
"With the *same spirit* that its author *writ*."

But ah! if that were indeed requisite, I should pity the man who was doomed to judge of this book in the same spirit in which many of its pages have been written. More sorrow would befal him; more gloom of thought, and more wretchedness of heart than I can wish

to be the lot of any human being. No, kind and indulgent reader, there is only *one spirit* in which I would ask you to judge me. The spirit of candour: a mild and unoffending spirit: a benign and gentle feeling, which like the quality of mercy is doubly blessed: for they who have it are happy, and they upon whom it is bestowed are contented. The cant of criticism I hate as much as did poor Yorick; the cant of sympathy is still worse: but an honest willingness to be pleased in this life, is the most amiable of all characters, and the happiest gift which God, in his greatest mercies, can bestow upon a mere mortal.

Sorrow, more or less, is the lot of every man; and it has been mine: but I have often *thought to myself* that Providence has vouchsafed me one

vent to the waters of affliction, when they overwhelm my soul, which is not vouchsafed to all men. In those moments of despondency, I find some such consolation in pouring forth my woes on paper, as women find in yielding up themselves to the soft dominion of tears. When my heart has been heavily oppressed, and no friend near to whom I could unburden it, or, what was the same thing, suffering under complicated feelings, which it had been mockery to attempt the description of, I have resorted to my pen, and every line I wrote seemed to remove a care. It was like a man burdened with many loads, dropping them as he goes along, at the places they are intended for, till at last he loses them all and finds only an exhausted lassitude remaining.

I remember, one night—not that

one night whose great events are yet unrecorded—but one night when I was sitting in my chamber pondering over my misfortunes—for they were manifold then—and had reduced me to a state of cheerless desolation—that I sat down and composed the following stanzas, as a further palliative, as a soothing balm, to my mind, torn and distracted with its thoughts. If the reader love not Melpomene, but would rather wanton it with her laughing sister, I entreat him to pass them over in disdainful silence rather than read them with a mind discordant to its subject.

TO MY PILLOW.

Take me kind pillow to thy soothing rest,
Receive a wretch the sport of endless wo;
Steep in oblivion's balm my aching breast,
And dry the tear afflictions force to flow.

In sleep's dull chain my aching senses bind,
Destroy awhile each bitter-biting care;
Be all my thoughts to fancied bliss resign'd,
And lost the dread impressions of despair.

Oh, kindly sleep! the wretch's only friend,
Shed thy soft dews upon my closing eyes—
Ah! that in sleep my weary days might clos
Then wake to bliss eternal in the skies.

For I have trod the mazy path of life,
Have known its sunshine, and its frowns endu
Have war'd with envy, malice, and with strife,
By fortune, fame or vanity allur'd.

Some star malignant on my birth arose,
Some demon hover'd o'er my infant head,
That still to agonise with untried woes,
This, the compunctions of remorse to shed.

While others reap the produce of their toil,
And sweeten labour with luxurious ease,
'Tis mine to perish on a barren soil,
The slave of those whom genius scorns to please.

I still am doom'd where'er my steps may roam,
To shrink beneath misfortune's bitter blast;
Torn from my native clime, my native home,
And down life's stream at helpless random cast.

Then teach me, God, with patience to endure!
Arm with thy panoply my sinking mind!
Teach me, tho' hard, to be content yet poor,
And tho' of hope bereft to be resign'd.

Teach me with cold indifference to survey,
All that could gladden my dejected breast;
Teach me the glance of gaiety to display,
To smile in want, t'appear in misery blest.

Teach my lorn heart the joys of life to spurn,
Each rising hope, each passion to suppress;
From scenes delusive, and from man to turn,
And *pleas'd* submit to each terrene distress.

But still kind heav'n, Oh let me still retain,
The ardent spirit of a generous mind!
Affections warm—and still that fix'd disdain
Of lordly pride with gibing scorn behind.

Still let me boast an independent heart,
Which will not bow where reason does not bid;
Above a mean, beneath a glorious part,
Content with virtue tho' her form be hid.

Still let me keep the valu'd friend I gain,
Who holds me his tho' stripp'd of fortunes pride,
Within whose breast congenial passions reign,
His heart the throne where virtuous hopes reside.

And these may all be mine—but not the rest,
The task too hard each feeling to o'ercome;
I still must greet each sorrow as my guest,
I still must languish for the silent tomb.

Then take me kindly pillow to thy rest,
Receive a wretch the sport of endless woe;
Steep in oblivion's balm my aching breast,
And dry the tear afflictions taught to flow.

The reader perhaps may *think to himself*, that I ought to have slept very soundly on my pillow after writing these lines. I hope if he does think so, that he has not formed his notions from any somnific influence which the effusions of my genius have had upon him. If he does, however, I cannot help it: but will conclude my chapter as the clock strikes twelve and I mean to go to bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

"The clock strikes twelve!" how natural a transition from that emphatic sentence to a sentence much more emphatic—(I mean in the course of this volume)—that sentence which, I dare say, the reader will remember as long as he remembers any thing—"ONE NIGHT!"

"The clock strikes twelve! we take no note of time
"But from its loss ———"

Such were the solemn words of the gloomy author of the Night Thoughts, and a solemn truth they inculcate. "Remember twelve!" says the fond,

despairing Belvidera to her cruel, but not remorseless husband, in a tone of voice that even now thrills through my heart; (Need I add the name of Siddons, in explanation of the sentence?) and remember "One Night," exclaims my impatient reader.

It is really a melancholy case when a man of regular philosophical habits, accustomed to all the close deductions of logical reasoning, and fond of that systematic pursuit of truth which leads to her recesses by the shortest and most obvious road; it is really a melancholy case, I say, when such a man, honestly desirous to tell what he has to tell, without any unnecessary circumlocution, or fantastical deviation, finds himself beset at every avenue of his labours with temptations which he cannot overcome, and therefore turns aside to avoid them, which

turning aside creates the very evil he is sedulous to escape—and just such a melancholy case is mine! The creature of the moment, I follow the stream of time into all its creeks and windings; if it leaves me sometimes to shallows and straits, it also conducts me sometimes to spots of heavenly beauty luxuriously arrayed in all the most enchanting colours, and combining all the most attractive features of nature. I know not, however, what right such chance-directed beings as myself have to write a book; and especially a book like the present, which professes to be, and ought to be, a methodical narrative. I am afraid the reader will hardly thank me for the side-way flowers which I have pulled in my course hitherto: such loitering may amuse an indolent mind, but it must always fail to gratify an active one: and more especially it

must fail to gratify a mind quickened by curiosity.

I have heard say, however, that next to not committing a fault, is the speedy reparation of it; for, that he who may have been betrayed into error by the weakness of momentary delusion, has it in his power to conciliate esteem and deserve pardon by a sincere and honest avowal of his offence. It is true there is such a road for the returning penitent, when he has been led astray by the impulse of accidental passion, or when he has deviated from imagined necessity rather than from choice; but what path presents itself to the sinner whose nature is his prompter, and who transgresses from the effects of habit deeply impressed upon all his actions? alas, I fear none: for I apprehend his power to seek forgiveness is even less than his hope of

obtaining it. I am no predestinarian; no advocate for necessity. I do not believe that men are born only for the purpose of committing certain crimes: but I *do* believe that a long course of action may so pervert nature, so stifle her voice, and so subdue her authority, that habit shall at last assume her throne, and promulge dictates too much like her own laws. "We are a bundle of habits," was justly said by one, whose own habits frequently required changing but seldom were changed: and out of that bundle, the one I most commonly wear is the party-coloured garment of irregular and discursive composition.

To an ingenuous mind there is nothing so irksome as reiterated apology. Unatoned vice is almost preferable to such perpetuated humiliation; and it betokens a degraded state of feeling to

see a man less ashamed to acknowledge error than commit it. As I therefore consider myself to possess an ingenuous mind (I hope no reader will mistake the word for ingenious) I would willingly bespeak the commiseration of mankind; for notwithstanding all that ingenuousness, behold to what a dilemma I am reduced!

Oh thou power of straight forward perseverance! angel or demon! or whate'er thou art, shed thy benign influence upon me, and teach me, for once, to keep on in the road that leads to my object, without quitting it, even for a moment, though I should chance to see the loveliest flower, or catch a glimpse of the noblest prospect that ever gladdened human eyes.

One night—I will begin—I will go

on—One night, when darkness overspread the earth; not a common darkness, but such a darkness as Macbeth invokes, a "thick night, pall'd in the dunnest smoke of hell"—at that period of the night too, when

"O'er one half the world
Nature seem'd dead, and wicked dreams abus'd
The curtain'd sleep; when witchcraft celebrated
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder
Alarmed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, with his stealthy pace
Mov'd like a ghost"———

Ghosts and darkness have always been sworn brothers; and the word ghost, coupled thus with the solemn and awe-inspiring name of night, reminds me of a tale, as horrible perhaps as man can tell, and yet as true as man can wish. The most heated enthusiast of the Radcliffe school, could not devise a more terrific one;

and were Lord Orford himself living he could not desire one better calculated to answer his notions of a work upon the supernatural, so written as to turn out at last, mere matter of fact. But having spoken so strongly in its behalf, perhaps it would be but right to gratify the reader's curiosity by relating it to him. I know it will please him, for all mankind are delighted with the mysterious.

"One night—"

"For heaven's sake," exclaims a reader, (I hear him in imagination) "for heaven's sake, do not begin with those ill-omened words: if you do, I shall certainly never know what your story is."

I am candid enough to admit the force of this objection, and therefore

I shall bow to it, beginning my narrative with an initial formula, prescriptively belonging to the marvellous.

"Once upon a time,"—that will do, I know—"once upon a time, a gentleman, who travelled for some commercial houses, arrived at an inn in the west of England, very late at night. He always put up there when in that part of the country; but unfortunately the house was so full of company, he could not be accommodated with a bed. The landlady was anxious to please a regular customer, and she offered to procure him a bed in a private house in the town. He declined this, saying he would content himself with the sitting up all night.

'That you need not do,' rejoined mine hostess of the Star and Garter,

for that was her sign, 'if you will consent to accept of such accommodation as I can offer you.'

'I'll accept any thing—of any piace that is clean, where I can lie down, for I'm weary and sleepy.'

'Well then,' added she, 'there's the ostler's bed in the loft; a pair of clean and well-aired sheets shall be put upon it, if you think you can pass the night there.'

'I'll sleep as soundly, as in the bed of his Majesty, God bless him!'

'God bless him, too,' for he deserves his blessing. 'Here, Susan, put a pair of clean sheets on John Ostler's bed in the hay loft; and make the place look tidy and neat, sweep it up; and put all conveniences into it; and

make haste, for Mr. —— is going to sleep there.'

'La, Ma'am,' said Susan.

'La, Ma'am!' reiterated her mistress. 'I say, La hussey; I'll warrant it will be as sweet and as comfortable as any bed in my house; and then for the matter of a loft, where's the harm of that? the gentleman is not like I am, short winded or so, a little asthmatical or so, and always husketty like of a morning, if I sleeps in a close place—go your ways and do as I bid you. Will you walk into the bar, and sit down, Sir; and take any thing, till your room, as I call it, is prepared.'

The gentleman accepted of the invitation, and called for a glass of spirits

and water to amuse himself while his bed was preparing.

It was not long before Susan returned, with a sort of credulous smile upon her countenance, to inform him that all was ready; when, having finished his glass, he took his candle, and repaired to his chamber. At the foot of the ladder which led to this abode stood its legitimate possessor, John Ostler, to warn his *locum tenens* of a broken rundle, which might mislead him into a false step. Over this dilapidated transverse piece of timber, however, he passed in safety, and entered his lodging, which he surveyed with great satisfaction, so neatly had Susan trimmed it up. He was soon disrobed, and soon in bed; soon asleep, and soon in darkness, for his candle burned itself out by two o'clock.

Inspire me ye invisible powers who hover over the writing-desks of the authors of the horrible! Give me their powers of language, and all their arts of colouring, by which the simple is magnified into greatness, and the intelligible into mystery. Enable me to envelope my purpose in the darkest clouds of obscurity, till the happy moment comes when I am to astonish and delight, by shewing that the marvellous was nothing more than the probable.

Just at that hour—namely two o'clock—when the gentleman in bed was all in darkness, he was awakened by a loud noise in his room. He started up in his bed, and beheld a ghastly and terrific form standing before him. The figure appeared to be scarcely human: his arms were bared, and dyed with blood up to the elbows;

in one hand was a knife reeking with gore, in the other he held a lamp: his raven locks hung wildly over his eyes, and his garments were spotted with blood. He advanced towards the bed, uttering a horrible and unintelligible noise. He raised the bloody knife to his throat, and drew it thrice across, then beckoned the gentleman to follow, and uttered again his horrid sounds. The gentleman

> "distill'd
> Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
> Sat dumb, and spoke not to him."

Still he advanced towards the bed, and still repeated the same actions and the same noise, only with greater vehemence, and pointing to the ladder, as if inviting him to follow. At length he summoned resolution from despair, and springing out of bed—put on his breeches. Then, arming himself with

the chamber-pot, as some defence, however inadequate, he followed his grim conductor, who beckoned him forward, repeating every moment the action of drawing the bloody knife across his throat, accompanied with a hellish grin. When they had thus reached about the middle of the ladder, he turned round, and looked steadily in the gentleman's face: suddenly the light was extinguished, a rustling noise ensued, and then nothing but darkness and silence encompassed our affrighted hero. He stood motionless for a while, uncertain what to do. At length he resolved to return to his bed, and watch through the remainder of the night. He did so: that is, he returned to his bed; but after sitting on his head's antipodes for about an hour, and nothing occurring during that period to excite his attention, his head gently dropped upon his pillow, and

his cares were resigned into the hands of Morpheus.

When he awoke in the morning, however, his first thoughts were about the terrific vision of the preceding night. No sooner did he descend from his loft than he hastened to his landlady, who accosted him with "Well, Sir, how did you sleep last night?"

"Sleep!" exclaimed the gentleman, "in God's name, do you suppose I could sleep? I was never so frightened in my life before, as I shall answer to God. Sleep! The Devil himself would have squealed with terror if he had been there: though I really believe he was there, though not in his own shape."

This speech was overheard by Susan and John Ostler, and several other

persons, who now gathered round the gentleman, and the landlady herself, violently entreating that he would explain what had happened. John Ostler was observed to be unusually eager; for his future peace and quietness was obviously concerned in the business.

"I hardly know," continued the gentleman, "how to tell you about it. However, you shall hear it first as it was.—I had not been asleep long, and my candle was burnt out, when I was awakened by a tremendous noise in my room; the noise could not be greater if an earthquake had happened. I immediately started up in bed, and, to my great astonishment, found a strong smell of sulphur in the room. I was a little alarmed at this; but hearing a heavy groan from that part where the door was, I directed my

view towards it, and beheld a spectacle that might have terrified the stoutest heart in England. I saw a figure of a monstrous height—I am certain not less than twelve or fifteen feet in height—"

"Lord!" said the ostler, "that's marvellous, indeed: why my loft is hardly high enough for me, and I'm only five foot seven."

"No matter for that," rejoined Susan; "a ghost can go any where."

"Aye so he can," said the ostler: "but I don't see how a tall ghost can stand up in a low room, unless he pushed the ceiling up with his head."

The gentleman, not at all disconcerted by these very obvious considerations, proceeded thus:

"This monstrous figure was surrounded by a blue flame, with a huge torch in one hand, that blazed like a furnace, and in the other a massy sword, all reeking with blood. His eyes were flaming in their sockets, and his hair hung over them like twisted snakes: his garments resembled—I vow to God I don't know what they resembled, I was so frightened.—While I was looking at this horrid phantom, it beckoned me to follow it, uttering a hideous yell, that you might have heard it five miles off—"

"Lord!" said the ostler again, "I was up all night, and I did not hear it."

"That may be," said Susan, "for it was not to you the ghost appeared: and I have heard of a ghost being seen

by only one person, though twenty others were present."

"This yell," pursued our narrator, "was followed by another motion for me to follow, and also by the spectre raising the sword to its throat, and uttering another horrid sound."—

John the ostler now began to laugh.

"I sprung out of bed, and followed till we arrived about the middle of the stairs, when the phantom turned round suddenly, looked at me, and then vanished in a cloud of smoke, leaving me in utter darkness."

"I think I know the bottom of this," said John.

"What do you know about it, you fool?" replied his mistress, who had

listened to the account with a sort of breathless horror.

"Why, I think," replied John, that "it was only poor Joe, who was looking for me, after he had killed the pig."

A moment's reflection served to flash conviction upon all present, except the gentleman himself, whose disturbed imagination had so distorted the facts; facts which were simply these:

There was kept about the house a poor dumb man, a harmless creature, who performed various menial offices. He had been killing a pig on the preceding night, and not knowing that the ostler had surrendered his bedchamber to a new occupier, he had, as usual, gone to solicit his assistance in swilling it. To make himself in-

telligible, he represented what he had been about by drawing the bloody knife across his throat. It was not until he had nearly reached the bottom of the ladder which led out of the loft, that he discerned his mistake; and when he found that it was not John who was accompanying him, he extinguished the light in terror, and made his escape. Such was the very natural incident as it *actually occurred*; as for the gentleman's subsequent account of it, I believe many of the wonderful tales that amuse mankind would be found to have just as rational a basis, could they always be as accurately known. I have been tempted to insert the story here, in the hope that it may repress that natural love of the marvellous which leads us to aggrandize the most ordinary occurrences, sometimes, into mysteries and miracles.

I feel so confident the reader will pardon this digression, for the sake of the moral it inculcates, that I shall not make any apology for it as a deviation from the main plan of my story. If there be any one who can, for a moment, prefer amusement to utility, his anger is unworthy of being propitiated: and therefore such, if such there be, I leave to the sullen indulgence of their resentment, and hasten, with joy and alacrity, to the incidents of my life, which I am extremely anxious to tell, and which the reader is, I am sure, as anxious to hear.

I must premise, however, by observing, that there was something prettily romantic in the immediate cause of my introduction into the family of Sir Peter Pix: it was not one of those vulgar occurrences which mark the destinies of vulgar men, nor one

of those every day events which every man can tell of. It was distinguished by a sudden brightness and glory of circumstances, such as denoted the brightness and glory of my after-life. If my readers doubt this assumption of glory and brightness, let them inquire my *name*, and they'll doubt no longer.

I own, however, that this is a very ambiguous way of referring them to the proof. *My name!*—May not that name be coupled with infamy? And is there not a sort of disgraceful notoriety in this life? a kind of corrupt and stinking popularity, which many are eager to arrive at, and which many obtain? All celebrated men are not celebrated for virtue: for the highest celebrity depends sometimes upon the highest guilt; and I am very much afraid the assassin who murdered Mr.

Perceval will go down to posterity more certainly than myself: the name of Bellingham will be recorded in the imperishable pages of history, when the name of —— will sleep with the ashes of its present possessor. And so let it: let it die with me; let it expire with the last breath that flutters on my lips, rather than live a standing and eternal monument of atrocious villainy and inexpiable guilt.

The occasion has thus unexpectedly presented itself, and I am strongly tempted to seize it as a God-send, by indulging in this opportunity of saying a few words respecting the lamented statesman, the memory of whose assassination still dwells with fresh and unmitigated horror upon the minds and hearts of every Englishman. May it never cease to do so! May we never forego that proud feature of our

national character! May we instinctively abhor the meanest of all murders, that which deprives its victim of life in the moment of unsuspecting security. I have heard indeed of some exceptions to this honorable characteristic of my country. Thank God, however, they were to be found among men who had already degraded themselves by a violation of the laws; among men who had already shaken off all moral restraint; among men who had already become odious and detestable in the estimation of every lover of social order. In them, therefore, it was only the consistent expression of their character and feelings.

On the private virtues of Mr. Perceval, it is not necessary for me to dwell; they have been acknowledged with a unanimity which affords the best proof of their eminence. Even

the rancour of political feeling was hushed over the grave of the departed statesman. I was in the House of Commons the day after his murder; and I never witnessed a scene more morally sublime than that which I then beheld. I heard his most active opponents while living, the foremost to stand up, and confess, with tears, that he excelled all men they had ever known in all the most endearing qualities of the human character. Not a voice was heard that did not speak in his praise; and those who could not bear any other testimony to his virtues, gave them the unbought tribute of their tears. The House presented the appearance of a theatre after a deep and affecting tragedy, rather than a senate, and with this striking difference, that no fictitious woes were there acted, nor did any weep from maudlin sensibilty: Nature spoke

through her most eloquent channels when she spoke in tears. One man alone of any note was absent on that day; and one man alone on the following day, when the House was about to resolve itself into a committee upon the intended provision for his widow and children, ventured to anticipate the impulses of charity, and the magnanimous oblivion of party feeling, by previously abjuring any implied pledge as to what his vote would be, by consenting to go into the committee. That man was Sir Francis Burdett. When the Honorable Baronet rose to speak, I well remember what was the general impression upon all strangers present, and I dare say upon all others. It was only on the preceding evening, the night of the assassination, that a brutal and lawless mob had exclaimed, with ferocious shouts, "Burdett and Bellingham for ever!" *This I heard, and*

therefore state it as a truth; and I will own that I thought, as did many others, that Sir Francis rose to vindicate himself with indignant feeling from the horrible alliance which unthinking wretches had provided for his name. I thought he meant to disclaim, almost with tears, such a union: that he meant to avenge his insulted character as a British Senator, by a noble disdain, and an unfeigned abhorrence of an act so atrocious, and so injurious to himself. But I was disappointed: not I alone, but hundreds were disappointed, in and out of the house. He did indeed—for he could not have done less—I will even venture to say he *dared* not have done less at that moment—he did indeed express his detestation of the act which deprived Mr. Perceval of his existence, and he did also open a door for himself to vote against the intended

provision for the orphan and the widow, should he see occasion so to do. I presume, however, he saw no such occasion, for he was silent; and that he made no allusion to the atrocious use of his name by the mob, I can ascribe only to his ignorance of the fact.

But I pass from this subject, thus unwillingly forced upon my attention, to one of more pleasing aspect. I pass to the character of Mr. Perceval, and I will depict that character as it appeared to me from an attentive examination of it, without embroiling myself, however, in any consideration of his measures as a minister. The time is yet too recent to expect that they can be done justice to: perhaps, indeed, the time never comes when a statesman's policy is appreciated without prejudice of some kind.

The chief talent which Mr. Perceval possessed in debate was a dexterity in reply, which never forsook him. He was an acute arguer, with some degree of sophistry. The feeble parts of his adversary's attack he was sure to note, and through that feeble part he commonly made a breach by which he was enabled to assault the stronger holds of defence. His logical precision of conception was sometimes confused by a verbosity of expression. His mind was untired. The whole weight of the administration rested upon him, for his colleagues in office were quite unable to cope with the Opposition; and he displayed a degree of skill and firmness in managing the House of Commons which few persons believed him to possess. The entire developement, indeed, of his character as a minister was produced by circumstances as they arose; and

no man perhaps ever won opinion from prejudice more perseveringly or more successfully than he did. There was an appearance of candour and sincerity in his manner, which irresistibly prepossessed those who saw and heard him; so much so, that I believe I may safely affirm, he never embraced any opinion, or continued to act upon any opinion, but from a firm and unfeigned conviction of its propriety. "His errors," said Mr. Canning, "were the errors of a virtuous mind."

One art he pre-eminently possessed: that of conciliating those whom he opposed. He never seemed to argue with anger. Conscious that he had a right to maintain his own sentiments, he always appeared to act as if he felt that the same right belonged to every other individual. He completely exemplified the maxim, *fortiter in re,*

suaviter in modo. He played about an opponent, but always made advances: he smiled at him with the very spirit of benevolence, but never failed while he smiled to aim the blow he was intending. In subtlety he was certainly unequalled in the House of Commons; but it must be allowed he had the common fault of too much refinement—he sometimes so spiritualized his ideas, that he was not always intelligible. He possessed considerable powers of raillery, which he knew exactly when to apply, and he applied them in a manner that amused rather than offended. He was often sarcastic too, and sometimes bitterly so. I have seen him most triumphantly successful in sarcasm against an Honourable Baronet, and especially on a very recent occasion, upon that Honourable Baronet's antipathy to the horse guards. Even in the very last

speech he delivered, that upon Mr. Brand's motion for Parliamentary Reform (Friday, May 8th), he was very happy in replying to some members who had inveighed against ministerial majorities, as composed chiefly of placemen and pensioners. The suavity of his manner, however, never forsook him: and it was hardly possible to be offended with a man who never seemed to wish to offend any one. Whoever has watched his public life must have been often struck with the extraordinary skill and energy with which he constantly met the united attacks of the Opposition: never dismayed, never disconcerted, never reduced to the necessity of surrender. On nights of important debate, he would sit a whole evening through, listen to the speeches on both sides, rise at two or three o'clock in the morning, and with almost incredible vivacity and dexterity

reply to them all; and if he did not always produce conviction, he at least removed many doubts and many objections.

With regard to the policy of his measures, it is not my intention to say any thing: I shall conclude by observing, that, take him altogether, I know not the man who is capable of filling exactly the same station. Perhaps, indeed, there may be some one thus capable, whom circumstances and an opportunity may draw forth, as they did Mr. Perceval: but, at the present moment, such a man does not politically exist.

CHAPTER IX.

I HOPE there is not one of my readers who will not forgive me this short digression, in honor of a man whose melancholy end every one must deplore; of a man whose dawn broke forth auspiciously to himself and his friends, but whose night—

"One night!"—methinks I hear a reader resounding in my ear.

Aye, courteous being, I hear the reproof, and blush while I acknowledge its justice. A thousand times I have wished I had never begun this volume; a thousand times I have wished I had finished it; and two thousand

times I have wished that I had proceeded in it according to all the known and received laws of literary composition. But what are the resolves of man, over-ruled by a superior destiny? Chaff before the wind, figures engraven upon the sands of the ocean, or shadows that flit before the eye when the western breeze agitates a field of ripened corn. Each of these is more fixed and stable than the transitory and fickle resolutions of the human mind; and may I not hope, therefore, that what is so common to every creature will be forgiven in me; especially if I earn that forgiveness by a more diligent discharge of my duty for the future.

One night, when all was solitude and darkness around me—I mean poetically speaking—for I had two lighted candles on my table, and therefore could not be in darkness, literally

to express myself—one night however, at that hour when every person who had not a taper or a lamp burning must have been in darkness—I was sitting in a pensive, melancholy attitude by my fire-side, revolving in my mind the mighty and Herculean task I had undertaken in writing this book, when—

⁂ The reader will perceive that this one night is not the one night which I have been so many days about—he shall hear of that presently—

"—when, *I thought to myself*, good God! how easy it would have been for me to have hit upon something more suitable to my genius than a novel: for genius I certainly have; every one will allow that who has read only this work, without saying any thing of my former productions, which are numerous and valu-

able: how much better, *I thought to myself*, I could have employed my time. And then I began to reckon up, in imagination, the various kinds of literary labour to which *I thought myself* competent: such as history, biography, moral essays, pathetic tales, dramas, antiquities, criticism, and its elder sister, Satire—ah! there lies my road, though I have never tried it," I exclaimed to myself: "I was born a satirist, but the milk of human kindness was so predominant in my nature, that I could not consent to sting any one: but surely that is no reason why I never should; for if, (to use the matter-of-course language of satirical gentlemen) if the vices and follies of the age have grown so rank that they offend the very nose of morality, it is but an act of duty to mow them down, and purify the garden of life from such

noxious weeds. It is astonishing how much these arguments convinced me that I ought to begin immediately with my scythe of satire to extirpate these excrescences: in fact, I longed to dabble a little in venom; and a man is soon convinced by any arguments that follow in the track of his own wishes. The more I thought, the stronger the desire grew upon me, till at last I fairly pushed away the paper on which I was then writing this masterly performance; and at the very moment when I was just going to tell what happened during that *one night* which has been so fatally procrastinated—(well might Young say, "procrastination is the thief of time," for I protest that I have lost a great deal of time over this accursed *one night*—and I am afraid my reader will protest he has lost as much)—and with a sort

of poetic phrenzy, a kind of inspired fury, a species of satirical enthusiasm, I seized the pen, and wrote the following lines:

N. B. I introduce them here merely as a specimen of what I can do. If I hear that the people like them, or if the Reviewers, kind, good-natured souls, should tell me that I have great powers as a satirist, and should advise me to cultivate my *genius* in that way, it is very probable I may complete what here I have only begun; but should the contrary occur; should I learn that the public despise my effusions, and should the Reviewers, crusty, crabbed fellows, tell me that I have no talent at all, no venom, no sting, but only the impotent desire to wound, without the power, and instead of advising me to cultivate my genius, bid

me follow some honest calling—why the brief memory of my satiric efforts will then be confined to the transitory existence of ONE NIGHT!

So now for my Muse—

ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWELVE:

A SATIRE: IN TWELVE BOOKS.

By ********.

BOOK I. PART I.

Oh, for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention.
SHAKSPEARE.

Come, pow'r of SATIRE! aid my gall-dipp'd pen,
To scourge the dullness of thick-headed men—
Come, with thy gloomy brow, and eye severe—
Eye of hard look, that never dropp'd a tear—
Thy scorn-curv'd lip, thy tongue of bitter phrase;
Thy fost'ring censure, and thy damning praise;
Come with thy smiling, frowning, leering face,
Compound of English surliness and French grimace;
Pleas'd to commend when Virtues rise to view,
Proud to condemn when Vice looks proud on you;

The foe of Folly, Ignorance, and Pride;
But Learning's handmaid, and her safest guide—
Come, touch thy vot'ry's lips with hallow'd fire,
And teach his hand to strike the sacred lyre:
Bid him be dumb, if tim'rous fears prevail,
Or if at rampant Vice his cheek turn pale;
Snatch, snatch the pen from his unworthy hand,
If Dullness reign in triumph o'er the land.
Throw round his heart thy shield of sure defence;
Give him thy scorn of fools, thy love of sense;
Purge the thick films of error from his mind,
That in *his* weakness none *their* strength may find;
Save those whose talents justify applause,
And worth would dignify the noblest cause:
These shall be safe enough; for all the rest,
Whose fame a satire is, whose works a jest,
Nothing shall shield them from satiric blight,
But death, or inability to write:
Nought else shall cow'r the Muse's lofty wing,
For *Hayley* sung—and *Scott* still lives to sing:
While all the race of *Cobbetts*, *Hunts* and *Tookes*,*
Spawn o'er the town their libels, lies, and books.

---

* Tooke is no more: his death happen'd since I wrote the line, and I would have left his name out, but I wanted a rhyme.

I know the perils of the cause I take,
But dare them all for truth's neglected sake;
Would dare much more if thrift might follow pain—
The *thrift* of *virtue*—not the *thrift* of *gain.*
If I could see, aw'd by this pen of mine,
One villain turning from his black design;
One blockhead trembling as he blots his page,
One rhymster harmless in poetic rage;
One pert, prim prater of the travelling race,
Silent at home, nor wish to change his place—
One maudlin statesman, o'er his gin and beer,
Forget o'er England's woes to shed a tear:
A tear most hallow'd in its crystal sluice,
Which seldom drops, though always fit for use.

Yes, could I see effects like these ensue,
Could scenes like these delight my eager view—
Could see the empire of majestic Truth
Flourish in all the loveliness of youth:
Could see fair Virtue make one noble stand
To save from infamy a sinking land;
Could see Religion in her sacred vest,
With holy pow'r control each Briton's breast—
Could see ONE PATRIOT—*worthy of the name,*
Great in his means, and greater in his aim,
No fool to fame, nor faction's meaner fool,
No desperate villain's mercenary tool;

No ban-dog of a furious party's hate,
Whose *patriot love* clogs up the wheels of state;
Or, (what is viler in this scroll of shame),
No rotten idol of a rabble's fame:
[The furious mob the noble mind disowns,
Their patriots are *Finnerty* or *Jones*,
Cobbett or *Hunt*—Indignant Muse forbear,
Names such as these are dark Oblivion's care:
No earthly record shall their triumphs tell;
Their record is—the register of H—ll.]

Yes, and the proud resolve I will repeat—
Could *such* success my feeble efforts greet;
Could honest joy my ardent breast inflame,
That public good entwin'd my wreath of fame;
Oh, I could brave the direst ills of hate,
Nor ask of Heaven to mitigate my fate:
But, greatly noble in a noble cause,
Smile on its malice as my best applause;
For a knave's hatred is a good man's crown,
And Virtue triumphs when the wicked frown.

But hence, ye bland delusions of the brain;
Hence ye fond hopes, fantastical and vain:
Let no wild visions of poetic fame
Warp my firm mind from its determin'd aim;
Let me stand forth the censor of the times,
If not in poetry, at least in rhymes;

Nor tell the world what it already knows,
In many a creeping page of creeping prose;
In judgment sit on authors of the land,
And deal my sentence with a righteous hand.

Hail, ye illustrious bards of other days,
Whose works to relish is a claim to praise:
Hail, ye choice few, a small but glorious band,
The proud remembrance of my native land;
Whose names exalted by thy deathless page,
Shine with the lustre of a Roman age;
To thee I turn—with filial reverence turn,
Studious thy matchless excellence to learn;
Like thee a nation's virtues would uphold,
Or form its taste in critic niceness bold.

When arts and learning fell with falling Rome,
And Fate, in her's, pronounc'd the general doom;
From the bleak North rush'd forth a mighty storm,
Arm'd with fell pow'r to ravage and deform;
Sullen and dark the gath'ring tempest grew,
And fierce its thunders on its victims flew;
Barbarian hordes forsook their frozen plains,
To forge for southern realms oppressive chains:
While following hordes urg'd on the mighty van,
And Science perish'd with degraded man.
Then bloody wars usurp'd the groaning world,
And Ignorance her sable flag unfurl'd;

The spacious pennon wrapp'd the gen'ral earth,
And Dullness triumph'd in her second birth.
Years roll'd on years along the gloomy void,
And not one ray the solemn night destroy'd;
In iron slumbers lay the human mind,
Oppress'd with fetters of the vilest kind;
While Rapine, Lust, and Superstition reign'd,
And what was wrung from slaves for Heav'n was gain'd.

Such was the awful deluge that burst forth
With force resistless from the teeming North:
A second deluge now from Scotia's realm
Threatens our southern plains to overwhelm—
O'erwhelm all taste in its capacious womb,
Of truth and candour too the general tomb.

Stand forth thou minstrel of the simp'ring throng,
King of eight syllables and feudal song;
Stand forth thou idol of the weak and vain,
Who pertly prattle o'er thy battle strain;
Who sigh and weep, and swear thy fluent line
Surpasses all the labours of the Nine.
Stand forth——"

Cætera desunt.

Here my genius forsook me, and, as Sheridan once said to Pitt, whom he was answering at great length, when he happened to lose his notes—"The Right Honourable Gentleman may rejoice at my misfortune; it's well for him I cannot go on:"—so Mr. Walter Scott and the Edinburgh Reviewers may bless themselves that invincible drowsiness overcame me, and paralised all further efforts of my pen. My intention was, as the reader will easily perceive, to indulge my satiric vein in exposing the want of taste, and the sceptical philosophy of the Scotch writers. The latter, indeed, might be considered a work of supererogation; for every one who knows any thing of the literature of Scotland knows that it has proved the fertile hot-bed of infidelity. The former may not, perhaps, be so immediately obvious, and therefore the *onus probandi* would have devolved upon

me: but I think I should have had no difficulty in establishing my positions. For instance, to mention only a few cases that occur immediately to my recollection, as proofs of Scotch taste among their most distinguished writers. To omit the Edinburgh Reviewers, who, on every occasion where taste is requisite, prove their utter ignorance of it, as their criticisms upon Southey, Miss Baillie, Walter Scott, Campbell, &c. will shew, I will advert to the case of Hume, whose critical opinions, in his History of England, are notoriously destitute of taste; the remarks on Shakspeare are a conspicuous example: then there is Dr. Beattie, who, in his Dissertations Moral and Critical, p. 552, 4to, ed. 1783, characterizes a volume of *Rhymes*, published by Mr. Pinkerton, as possessing "a great store of poetical ideas expressed with great strength, elegance, and harmony;"

while every person who has happened to detect the volume in its present obscurity, must pronounce it a wretched compound of affectation and bombast. But I would adduce the case of Mr. Pinkerton himself, another Scotchman, who, in his "Modern Geography," imagines he displays a singular felicity of taste in the following sentence;—

"It was a watchmaker's apprentice who first praised savages, and decried civilised life." Vol. iii. p. 349. ed. 1807.

To enable the reader to comprehend Mr. Pinkerton's taste, his irony, and his wit, I need hardly inform him that he means Rousseau, a man whose writings will be read with enthusiasm and feeling when Mr. Pinkerton's ponderous volumes of laborious re-

search, will become antiquated, and when his other works will be forgotten. Any person who has read Mr. Pinkerton's *Recollections of Paris*, also, will have a very shrewd recollection of his taste: but, for those who have not had that felicity, the following specimen of his taste in composition may suffice; especially if they happen to know that he announces, in the preface to his Geography, his right to be considered as a model of good writing:

"This fatal doctrine, which represents equality and inequality as accidental to human nature, instead of necessary and unavoidable, is inwoven in our very texture! flowing in our veins!! harmonizing our nerves!!! strengthening our bones!!!! animating every fibre and filament of our brains!!!!! has led, &c." Vol. i. p. 286.

In prosecuting my research into the evidences of Scotchmen's want of taste, I might have adverted also to Dr. Anderson's Life of Smollett, which is a tissue of bad taste; also to Mr. Walter Scott's criticism upon Burn's poetry, in the Quarterly Review, and especially to his edition of Dryden, which I will venture to pronounce a huge monument of disgrace to the national literature: all which instances, joined to some others which a few minutes recollection would suggest, would have justified me in pronouncing of Scotch literature, that it is a deluge which threatens to overwhelm, like a mountain torrent of the North, rather than to fertilize, like the overflowing of the Nile.

But the aim of my indignant satire would have taken a wider field: some others of the " mob of gentlemen who

write with ease," would have suffered under the lash. In short, I should have produced such a poem—*Ah, mon Dieu!* is it possible to say what I should have produced?

Well, courteous readers, and well, kind critics, you know how to have this crop of satire. Only manure my soil thoroughly with the ordure of applause, and my couplets will shoot up like blades of grass: and I shall leave you afterwards in the full enjoyment of that placid feeling which surely every bosom must experience, when it reflects that it has fostered the modesty of this youthful genius into the full expansion of its glory.

And so good night:—

Good night!—Heavens! how many an aching heart denies, in bitterness

of grief, that the night which the happy call *good* is *good* to them!—How many, who hide in decent shame the sorrows of their condition, that the insulting eye of the world may not look upon them, feel an inward pang, and a sharp one too, when parting with some prosperous friend, who, in the understood acceptation of the term, wishes them a *good* night: alas! they know their night is to be one of silent wretchedness and brooding, melancholy woe. These are the stings which make life dreadful while we feel them: sorrows that we can, or will tell, lose half their poignancy by participation: but he who is a miser of his grief, and hoards it in his bosom with selfish scorn of consolation, or honest pride that spurns at pity, he it is who feels what grief really is; and never does he feel it more, perhaps, than when he finds himself the presumed

possessor of happiness. Oh! there is in the cheerful smile of a friend, when the mind is agonizing beneath concealed pain, something, in my apprehension at least, more distressing than language can describe. It looks like indifference while it is not; and it forces the heart upon such an acute consciousness of the difference between what it is, and what it is thought to be, that the—

Upon my soul I do not know how to finish the sentence. I want to make a fine poetical conclusion, and I cannot find words to do it. Is this a proof of the sublimity or the folly of my ideas? or does it imply either? I leave these weighty questions for the reader to solve; while this I must say, that such a smile at such a moment as I have been describing, is like the

sudden and momentary glimpse of an evening sun gilding a barren moor: the bright rays are quenched in night, and the gloomy barrenness appears ten times more awful.

Thus I have hammered out something at last; and I could perhaps have finished the other, had I not been in a hurry to go to bed. It must remain now, a piece of unfinished beauty for all posterity to gaze at; and I doubt whether any future author will have the temerity to attempt what I have relinquished. It would be as if a hewer of grave stones should offer to make a nose for Venus de Medicis, supposing the lady had lost her own; in which, though he might prove his ambition, perhaps, I doubt if any one would say he shewed himself to be *emunctæ naris homo!*

After such a pun as that, it would be a crime not to finish the chapter, for it is impossible to be so lavish of my treasures as to give two in one chapter.

CHAPTER X.

He who braves death with the greatest intrepidity meets him at last, and owns his conqueror: he who despises poverty may sometimes be poor: the swiftest of foot may be stretched on a bed unable to move: the most eloquent may be paralyzed, and denied the powers of utterance, and the most beautiful may live to see the wrecks of their own loveliness. Nothing is fixed in this life: all is fluctuating; all is mutable; all is transitory; day succeeds to night, and night—

Aye, that word night reminds me of what I intended to say when I begun this chapter in such a lofty strain of

composition. *I thought to myself*, when I took up the pen, that as the brave die, and the swift become inert, and the rich become poor, and the eloquent become mute, and the beauteous ugly, so the wavering and the desultory may at last become fixed. I was led into this opinion from a sort of feeling which was then strong upon my mind, as if I had an anxiety to finish my long protracted narrative: as if I had a wish to let the reader know the real and very curious occurrences of that *one night* which proved a most serious day for me. That restlessness which always accompanies unfinished labours, that anxiety which ever belongs to progressive undertakings, begin now to prey upon my spirits; and really, I feel so much for the reader himself, whose curiosity must have been dreadfully tantalized, that I am resolved to assume a virtue

if I have it not, and proceed to the immediate relation of my infantile adventures.

One thing is very curious, however, and which I must mention. It is this; that since I began this work I have discovered, by a singular accident, that the night on which the melancholy catastrophe happened was illuminated by a resplendent moon. That chaste orb beheld the awful scene; and, as I have heard, (for poets say so) veiled her face in a silvery cloud, that she might not see it too distinctly, just as a bashful virgin indulges only in an averted glance at things unseemly; or just as an antiquated virgin whom I have heard of, gratified her half longing propensities when a naked man ran past her, who had undertaken to win a wager by running a certain distance in a state of nudity.

"Ah! you nasty beast," said the shocked and affrighted maiden, putting her hand to her eyes, with each finger distended, so that her vision was not wholly obstructed, "ah, you nasty beast, I hope you'll lose it!"—"What?" said a by-stander.

In some such modest attitude I suppose Madam Luna was on that night to which I have so often alluded: for though I am credibly informed she was visible in all her brightness at first, she was afterwards beheld only in cloudy darkness.

The reader, perhaps, may be curious to know how I discovered this fact, which belongs rather to the natural history of my book, than to its epic part. I wish I could satisfy his curiosity at present: but I am so eager to satisfy his curiosity upon a much

more interesting subject, that I cannot now stop to do it. I promise him, however, he shall have the whole account in the second volume; for I know how important every thing must be which concerns myself: I mean *to* myself.

One night—by the by, I might as well begin in a different way, and more consistently with my recent discovery; by which means, perhaps, I shall be more likely to get to an end.

One fine moon-light night—about—that is, just upon the stroke of twelve—

Now, had my father happened to have been coming home from his club at that hour, instead of being snoring in his bed, as he really was; and as the reader already knows—and had he

been conversant with Shakspeare—with what an elegant poetic enthusiasm—especially in a trunk-maker—might he not have exclaimed—as he suddenly reclined with his rump against a post—(I thought it necessary to specify the *precise part* that was to be turned to the post, as all the interesting and romantic simplicity of the scene might have been destroyed by a very obvious mistake—especially when it is supposed that he was coming from a club, and therefore likely to be surcharged with the inspiring fumes of gin and porter)—I ask—and I ask it with a sincere confidence in the propriety of the question, whether my father might not, had he been so circumstanced, have exclaimed, in the language of our immortal bard,

"The MOON shines bright."

I know that this stump of a line looks

oddly, and has something ludicrous about it; but suppose my father had a good memory, and went on thus—

> "In such a night as this,
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
> And they did make no noise: in such a night,
> Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
> And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
> Where Cressid lay that night."

And suppose my mother had been looking out of the window, impatient for my father's return, and had heard this,—(I hope she heard it distinctly—for "gently kissing," and "making no noise," might otherwise have awakened strange notions in her mind), and suppose she had happened to know Shakspeare just as well as my father—which I'll venture to say she did—might she not then have answered thus—

> "In such a night
> Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away."

Now the reader will be good enough to suppose the post against which my father was leaning opposite his own door; and then—Heavens, what a romantic thought—we may next suppose that my sire, casting up his eyes to the second floor, and seeing his better half, with a pocket handkerchief in her hand, replied with increased energy—

"In such a night
Stood DIDO with a willow in her hand,
Upon the wild sea-banks, and wav'd her love
To come again to Carthage."

What next? Why then, it is as easy to suppose that my mother, resolving not to be outdone in a mere matter of memory, exclaimed,

"In such a night
Did JESSICA steal from the wealthy Jew,

And with an unthrift love did run from Venice,
As far as Belmont."

This would be touching a tender chord; for my father actually ran away with my mother from Eastcheap as far as Kennington, where they were married: my mother was a tallow-chandler's daughter—and melted to complying love at the very moment when her father was melting tallow—about the same hour that this dialogue is supposed to take place—they ran away *at night*, and were married in the *morning*—a sort of taste—before—you—buy-system—let the reader judge however with what thrilling emotions my father may be supposed to have answered the following applicable words:

"And in such a night
Did young LORENZO swear he lov'd her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one."

It is very singular—but my father's name actually happened to be Nichólas Lorenzo Fidgius—my mother's name, indeed, did not tally so prosperously with this poetical dialogue: but suppose her to supply the name of *Jessica* with her own, which was *Margery*, then, with what a tender air may she be imagined to reply:

> "And in such a night
> Did pretty MARGERY watch her husband home,
> And he forgave her."

Just at that time, the watchman coming round the corner, my father might aptly add:

> "I would out-night you, did nobody come;
> But, hark, I hear the footing of a man:
> So come and open the door."

Alas! alas! how pleasing are the dreams of fiction? and how unlike are

they, too often, to reality? In what a charming dream I have indulged.—What a soothing picture of conjugal felicity I conjured up in imagination; and the time which I have chosen for the display of that picture, a period marked, beyond all others, in the lives of my parents, by a melancholy and distressing event. Would to God that what I have now to record were only supposition, such as the imaginary dialogue I have just written: but no—the dreadful curtain is withdrawn, and I must display such a scene of horror and confusion; such a scene as my feeble pen can never do justice to.

I confess I do not like the appearance, even in imagination, of such gloomy and solemn things. I hate a grave appearance either in nature or in man: and for that reason I seldom go

into a court of justice, because I dislike to look at the surly dignity of the big-wigs who sit there. They are enough to frighten an innocent man, and make him think of the gallows, much less a guilty one; and I think if I were a criminal at their bar, I should be very much of the honest Hibernian's opinion, who, when he was indicted for murder, and the evidence had fully proved the fact, was asked what he had to say in his defence.

"Troth, and I have very little to say, you may be sure of that; for to spake my mind upon the business, I don't like the appearance either of your lordships or of the jury: by Jasus, I don't think a man's life is safe in your hands; I tell you that now, so the less we say about it the better."

Poor Pat's notions were very correct, but I am afraid they would not operate much in his favour—be that as it may, however, I shall conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE is nothing so dangerous as improvident delays; I say *improvident* delays, because delay is sometimes a virtue; and we all know that a Roman general, Fabius I believe, for I have forgotten all my Greek,* received the sirname of *Cunctator*, because he fought Hannibal without once meeting him. *His* delay saved the state;

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* Perhaps the reader will remember the anecdote of Nicholas Pradon, the French poet, and affected rival of Racine, who being one day reproached by the Prince of Conti for having transported a European town into Asia, replied, "Ah! your Highness will excuse me; but I am not at all skilled in *chronology*."

but *mine*, I am afraid, will save nothing except my own character, and how it will do that I leave my reader to find out. Character, however, is a very ticklish thing to meddle with: it is like a woman's virginity, very soon destroyed, and when destroyed, never to be restored; but though the comparison runs thus far, it runs no further: for a matron is a more venerable being than a virgin; not so desirable, perhaps, at least in the ordinary apprehensions of mankind; while a man deflowered of his reputation, loses probably the only thing of value that he can morally possess. God knows, for my own part, I can feelingly exclaim with Iago—

"Good name in man and woman
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals MY purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes *me poor* indeed—"

For, upon my soul, it is all I have to live by. I really cannot afford to have a bad character. Colonel Chartres, noted for every villany that human nature can well perpetrate, used to say he would give five thousand pounds for a good character, because he could make twenty thousand by it. In that way, indeed, it might become a matter of prudent speculation, but the danger is, that when you have sold your good character, the market will be closed against you, and it will be impossible to purchase another.

Notwithstanding all this fine dissertation upon character, however, I do not propose explaining how my cha-

racter is to be saved by not performing my promise. The fact is certainly so: but I shall leave it as a theorem for the sagacity of my readers to discuss, and to prove by argument.

I am sadly afraid, and I speak it without any egotism, that this book which I am now preparing for the world and posterity will do much harm. My fear is, that many well-disposed persons, when they are hereafter going to tell something which has really happened, and which they really mean to tell expeditiously, should they unluckily begin with that very familiar phrase, "One night," will be immediately stopped, and entreated not to use a combination of words so disastrous in their influence upon me. It should be remembered, however, that every person is not equally afflicted by the spirit of procrastina-

tion: every person is not equally the victim of that malign demon of delay which has hovered over me, and hung upon my pen with most unholy influence; let me hope, therefore, that justice will be done by posterity, and even by my contemporaries: I plead only for others; for myself, I am so heartily sick of the unhappy words, that I believe I shall never hear them uttered again without a shudder: I am sure I shall never utter them myself any more; I mean *viva voce*.

I now intend begin seriously, and proceed with my narrative; like a hardened sinner, whose piety commences with a death-bed repentance, I have nearly run my career, and when the curtain is about to drop, when in fact I hardly know how to sin any more, I propose renouncing my errors, and embracing the cause of virtue.

There is a great danger in old connexions when those connexions happen to be vicious, and consequently we always find that the first step which moralists recommend in the road to virtue, is to turn aside, not only from former practices, but from former companions in those practices. Example, we all know, is more powerful than precept; and, for my own part, I have always been a friend to practical ethics; for what the Roman poet has said of the drama, may, with equal truth, be applied to morality:

Segnius irritant animos demissa *per aurem*,
Quam quæ sunt *oculis* subjecta fidelibus et quæ
Ipse sibi tradit spectator. HOR.

For this reason, I think it will be but prudent in me, if I hope ever to conclude the account of my entrance into Sir Peter Pix's family, to com-

mence that account with a different modification of phraseology. For example—

It is now about thirty years ago,—it may be something more—but it certainly cannot be less:—I know it cannot be less, because I am more than forty years old, and I was at least ten when the event happened which I am now going to narrate; therefore, without any such gross violation of chronology as poor Pradon committed, I may venture to say that it is now about thirty years ago;—that is, nearly two years after the disgraceful riots in London, which were fomented by the Burdett of that day, I mean Lord George Gordon, though their ostensible reason was different:—religion was the watch-word then—liberty and reform are the tocsin now; but the ultimate object is the same, confusion,

anarchy, bloodshed, and ruin. Two years after those riots, when—

Perhaps it would add to the distinctness of the reader's conception, if I were to state the precise year in numerals, rather than leave him to infer it by a collation of circumstances such as I have been mentioning, therefore I will do so.

The riots happened in MDCCLXXX; that is, thirty-two years ago; consequently, if the dreadful occurrence which I am going to tell, took place only thirty years ago—and I will use round numbers for the sake of explicitness—the precise year must have been MDCCLXXXII. Thus much for the specification of the year; as to the precise month, or day of the month, or rather night of the month, I am not exactly able to be so accurate and par-

ticular. I know, indeed, that it was in the summer time, because I well recollect that I had some gooseberry-fool for supper that night; and, by the by, I remember that I was at home for the Midsummer holidays, as it just now occurs to me that the gooseberry-fool was given as a reward for my diligent application in learning a chapter from the Bible, which my master had set me, and the other boys, as a sort of amusement during the recess. Now the school always broke up about the 22d of June; and as I had three weeks holidays, I well remember that I never began to con my task till at least one half of the three weeks had expired: one half of three weeks is ten days and a half; and if you add these ten days and half to the 22d of June thus—

June — —	22	
	$10\frac{1}{2}$	days.
Which make —	$32\frac{1}{2}$	
Deduct from this -	30	being the number of days in June,
and there will remain	$2\frac{1}{2}$	days.

This will make it July 2d, to which if you add $\frac{1}{2}$ day, it will just make it twelve o'clock at night, on the 2d of July, 1782: and I really think, if there were any possibility of consulting an authentic record as to the event I am alluding to, it would be found that I have established the date, by a series of inductive circumstances, altogether as extraordinary and ingenious, perhaps, as any which are to be found in the chronological labours of the great Sir Isaac Newton: not that I mean to compare him to me, or myself to him: I briefly allude to Sir Isaac, because his name happened to occur to me.

Well then—on the 2d of July, 1782—what a clearness it gives to one's ideas, when dates are thus distinctly put forth—on the 2d of July, 1782, at exactly twelve o'clock at night, an event took place of most extraordinary importance. It was no less a circumstance than that which the reader has so long been waiting to hear, and for the disclosure of which he shall not wait much longer.

"A quarter of an ounce of patience is sufficient for such grievances,"* says Montagne, referring to sundry

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* *Un quart d'once de patience, pourvoit a tels inconveniens.*—See Montague's Essays, B. iii. ch. x., ed. 1657, folio, Paris.—N. B. This copy is in my possession, and I value it above any book in my library, for I *have* a library, though a small one.

little evils which beset our course in this life; and I think something less than a quarter of an ounce of that same patience would be sufficient for the disappointments of my readers.— But, as I do not want to be instrumental in raising the value of that very scarce and excellent commodity, I propose redeeming my pledge forthwith.

Having ascertained, beyond all controversy, the year and the day of the month on which this great catastrophe happened, I have now nothing more to do than to tell the catastrophe itself. And here I find myself, unexpectedly, placed in a very aukward situation. I am like a man whose procrastinating spirit has driven him into the difficulty of doing ten hours work in one. In short, I am like myself; for I have left that to be done at the conclusion

of my book, which I should hardly have found room for had I begun it at the commencement; or rather, I am certainly like what we all describe ourselves to be once a week; for I hope all my readers go to church on Sundays; and I cordially hope none of my readers are methodists, or dissenters, or catholics, or dissidents of any kind—in which case, if they are neither of those, and yet attend church regularly, they do, necessarily, describe themselves once a week, as "doing those things which they ought not to have done," and as "leaving undone those things which they ought to have done."

That is precisely my case, and with this aggravation added to it, that I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, till there is no longer any time to do it. I have not

even the chance of a death-bed repentance; for it is essential to that repentance, that it should be complete and sincere. Mine may be sincere, but I am afraid it cannot be complete; yet it shall be my aim, as it ought to be the aim of every good Christian, to make it as complete as he can. *Ecce signum!*

On the 2d of July, I was the victim of a most lamentable occurrence; an occurrence more calculated than any I ever heard of to excite the sympathy of mankind: for, as Shakspeare has observed,

> "In the morn, and liquid dew of life,
> Contagious blastments are most imminent."

And, God knows, it was in the very morning of existence, besides being in the morning in point of time, that the dreadful circumstance occured. Figure

to yourself, reader, an innocent youth, locked in the slumbers of a still more innocent sleep—sleep, which as Shakspeare again observes,

" Knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast—"

Sir Peter Pix had been having a great feast in his house that night, and it was in consequence of that very feast that the catastrophe occurred; for the cook—and now I am coming to the very matter—the cook, who had fallen asleep, instead of minding some butter that was gently melting on the fire, suffered it to boil over, and the consequence may be easily guessed without my telling it.

This, however, I will say, that if she had been minding her duty, the

butter would not have been wasted: and if I had minded mine, my reader's time would have been saved. As it is, my only consolation is this, that if I detain them at all, I cannot detain them long, for all that I have written upon the occasion may be read in

"ONE NIGHT."

Reader, farewell: the curtain drops;

And midnight, universal midnight reigns.

YOUNG.

THE END.

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